

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FROM WITHIN

AND OTHER MEMORIES

BY

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WITH A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.
(Never before Published)

BY

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PREFACE

SOME part of the credit of this book and the success, which I hope will equal that of its predecessor, is undoubtedly due to the kind help I have received from various quarters. First, I must mention my old friend, Eugene Wason, and then the Sergeant-at-Arms and his son, Col. Lockwood and his aide-de-camp Mr. King, Sir Everard Doyle, Mr. Dods Shaw, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. R. Bailey of the Stationery Office, and others.

Through their kind aid I have been enabled to make a careful study of the various departments of the House of Commons, which may prove to be interesting, and perhaps valuable.

To one and all I return my cordial thanks and that of my readers.

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CHAPTER I

APOLOGIA PRO LIBRO MEO

I WISH to warn those good people who are thinking of reading this book, the risk they may possibly run—for it is going to be very different from my last—*In and Out of Parliament*. I was then in a very bland frame of mind and cooed as gently as any sucking dove. Now I am going to launch my thunderbolts with partisan fury and all the zeal of a strong party man. I intend to criticise all round, but it will be noted that my freedom from official relations to my old political leaders enables me, whilst retaining my former allegiance, to take a somewhat impartial view of their proceedings, and to sprinkle praise and blame pretty equally along both Front Benches, and whilst I do so, let it be understood that I make no imputation against the personal honour or integrity of any one. I have freely criticised the Labour party, but I honour their characters, and respect their motives, and if the Tories (I have never yet used the term Liberal Unionist) sometimes say things that are not borne out by facts, I give

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them the credit of believing what they say. Cranks and faddists are a nuisance; but they are necessary to progress, and even window-smashers, though their old supporters may deplore their methods, are, no doubt, actuated by a sense of duty. So all things are perhaps ordered for the best in the best possible of all worlds. If my critics are as sharp as they usually are, and I can see no deficiency of this commodity in them, they will call this book discursive—and I wish to explain that it has been made so of set purpose. The great thing after all is to be readable, and this can be better attained by rambling about a bit, rather than by sticking too closely to the long, straight, dusty highroad. So in the course of our journey when we see a tempting little path leading us into some woodland glade, where the birds are singing, the pine-trees rustling their aromatic breezes over our heads, and the green of the grass and the variegated charm of the wild flowers delight our eyes, we will turn aside and enter into confidential relations with Nature; and then, refreshed with what we have seen and heard, resume our journey light-heartedly towards the next halting-place.

There is a perfect and apparently infectious epidemic of biography writing just now, and every one who can afford pen, ink and paper, knows how to use them in a coherent manner, and can find a confiding publisher, thinks it necessary to button-hole the public with the skinny hand after a possible failure with the glittering eye. I am bound to say that as my acquaintance with this class of literature is now extensive and peculiar,

I have never taken up one of these confidential volumes—not excepting my own—without finding in it something amusing and possibly instructive. For surely this is the best way both to make and to appreciate history—a cut and dried series of disquisitions on public affairs dug at second-hand out of musty records and dreary blue-books, can never compare in freshness and suggestion with the first-hand impressions of those who have themselves lived in the times they have described. For instance, what can exceed in vivid interest those great biographies of Johnson and Walter Scott, Gladstone and Lord Herbert, Lord Granville and Lord Randolph Churchill, *cum multis aliis*. In this way can we best follow the run of current events and form our own conclusions not always perhaps by following theirs. There is something in the life drama of even the humblest among us which contains material, however small and insignificant, that may impress a footstep on the sands of time. One of my favourite books is the *Diary of a Nobody*, written by George Grossmith, and illustrated by Weedon, which appeared a good many years ago in *Punch*, but which had fallen into unmerited oblivion, until Lord Rosebery lately expressed his high appreciation of it. It describes the absolutely insignificant life of an obscure city clerk, appropriately named Pooter; but I defy any one to put it down save with regret, and beg to move a hearty vote of thanks to the authors for some good cheery laughs. In the words of good old Harry Sydney, dear to the memory of frequenters of Evans’—“So very much depends upon the way in which it’s done.”

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Some of these biographies have been most useful in letting us behind the scenes to appreciate at their right worth some public men who have been imperfectly understood. Until I read Lord Granville's life I have had no idea that he was such a potent political personality. The popular notion was that he was a kind of purring pussy, whose success as a Foreign Minister was largely due to his admirable manners and perfect knowledge of French. But when we reach the last page we see him for what he was, strong, resolute, the real masterful power of every Government with which he was connected. Nor did I, at least, know before what immense service Sidney Herbert rendered to the State and how freely he spent himself, and practically gave up his life by his self-sacrificing labours to retrieve the national credit from the wretched blunders and failures of the Crimean War. Again few except real students of history knew until they read the lives of Earl Russell and of his delightful wife, whose friendship I was privileged to enjoy, what warmth of heart and bright geniality lurked behind an apparently cold and reserved manner, and how large a share he really had in giving us the inestimable boons of Free Trade and Reform. And the life of General Sir William Butler, which I regard as one of the best books of modern times, gives us, with chapter and verse beyond dispute, an account of his career, which, distinguished as it was, should have been far more so had he not been made the scapegoat of the almost incredible blundering, pig-headed folly and obstinacy of the War Office during the South African War, and the real history of which, if those

who are really in the know dared to speak, would cast a lurid light on the so-called statesmanship of those dark times. I have no hesitancy in saying that if Butler's advice had been taken, we should perhaps have had no war at all, or, if it had been inevitable, it would have been conducted in a very different way.

On the other hand, attempts are sometimes made, not too successfully, to set forth the life and history of people whose failure had better have been allowed to remain in oblivion. Not all the literary skill of his biographer could absolve his friend Colley from the sad way in which his want of military capacity in the supreme hour of need, cast such a grievous slur on our prestige by the disaster of Majuba Hill. And the temporary mental aberration of Admiral Sir J. Tryon only closed a brilliant career in melancholy fashion, and makes one wish that his great fame should not have been allowed to remain tarnished by this tactless attempt to direct special attention to the one blunder of his life.

Is there then any real excuse for what I am about to do? Why write any more? Is it not, as we Scotch people say, rather "a tempting of Providence" to take up the pen again, after an amount of success, which I certainly did not expect, and which I am not quite convinced that I really deserved? And literary continuations are apt to be boring. We are, of course, glad to meet Bishop Proudie and the Marchioness of Dumbello, and other Trollopian heroes and heroines again, and Dumas' swashbuckler cavaliers cannot swagger through his absorbing pages too often for our taste. But these masterpieces of domestic and chival-

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rous romance are not to be met with in every circulating library, and in a general way, although we may part regretfully with the characters whose friendship we have made between green or yellow leaves, or the more substantial covers of the modern novel, it is perhaps best to make them a final adieu when *finis* is written, and remake our acquaintances. Addison killed Sir Roger de Coverley because Steele was making too free with him, and the reconstructed hero of a former romance is apt to slip through the pages of its successor, with a ghost-like temerity barely suggesting, or but faintly recalling the robust personality of former days. What I now fear is that my northern friends when they take up *opus* No. 2, may exclaim, "Cauld kail het again!"—and recooked meats are proverbially unwholesome. However, I am going to do a really mean thing and fix the responsibility for my reappearance before the footlights on some one else. First and foremost, on my publishers, whose spirited exertions on my behalf have not yet landed them in the bankruptcy court, and who gave me a cordial invitation once more to "*rax*" my brains and see if I could squeeze anything out of them; and secondly, on my critics, who have been extraordinarily friendly and appreciative, and the thick volume containing those detailed examinations of my humble pages is a perpetual joy to myself and my friends. I don't pretend that an occasional jarring note was not sometimes struck, as when an infallible admirer sheltered behind the anonymous "we" of the universe, told me in terms of lofty patronage that although the writing of my book may have given great pleasure to

myself, he could see no valid reason for its publication. To this I am inclined to reply in the immortal words of Bernard Shaw, who was enthusiastically called before the curtain at the conclusion of one of his plays. The universal storm of applause was punctuated by a single hiss in the gallery. Thither looked up Shaw with the remark, "I quite agree with you, sir—but what can we do against all these other people?" And another critic, speaking with the high authority of a leading tribunal of literary opinion, asserted that my opinions were slap-dash, and my style "Corinthian." As regards the first accusation, I own the soft impeachment, and in extenuation I can only say, that although they are poor things, they are still my own, and I cannot bear to part with them. What "Corinthian" means in connection with modes of expression, I cannot imagine, and I regret this, for I should like to profit by good advice, and no means of doing so in this case are provided. I well remember the Corinthian, the Bohemian associate of Bob Logic in Pierce Egan's now forgotten book, and if this should meet the eye of my friendly reviewer, perhaps he will kindly give me some information on a matter which to me is a deep mystery. Although I know it is a Philistine thing to say, I am not much of a believer in style—so-called, and perhaps this is the safest line to take, for we are told that it is an uncommunicable gift, and that it is inherent in one's intimate nature—"Le style est l'homme." John Morley, and no one has a better right to speak with authority, lays down his conviction that there are no fixed rules, and that the only way to write good English

is to read our best authors with deliberate appreciation, and any one with a good ear can pick up the knack more or less. Thackeray said that he would have written better if he had studied Fielding's works before he was ten, and Johnson roared out in his dogmatic tones that the only way to write good English was to devote one's days and nights to the study of Addison. But years ago, I reached independently the same opinion as Matthew Arnold that this venerated classic is really much overrated, and that putting Sir Roger de Coverley on one side, his vaunted essays are often trivial and commonplace; and Herbert Spencer in the *Study of Sociology* goes one better than this, and shows how faulty the construction of Addison's sentences often is. Macaulay, too, gives a most amusing instance of the way in which the great lexicographer thought it necessary to put on his big bow-wow style when he transferred a simple bit of narrative from his diary to his *Tour in the Hebrides*. The painful strivings after perfection recorded by Stevenson, occasionally result to my humble thinking in artificiality and ponderosity, and the necessity which rather worries me, of hearing too distinctly the creaking of the machinery; and as for his imitators and disciples, the irritation which they excite in my plain and uncultured mind, quite equals the effect which Mr. Bonar Law claims as the most successful result of his oratorical performances. So reader, gentle or otherwise, don't expect too much when you "tackle" this book, for you must take me "just as I am." You will find no attempt at fine writing; but I will tell my plain unvarnished tale simply and

practically, and free from the artificialities and mannerisms of those who despise the obvious, and hold that truth, if not pulled from the bottom of a well, must be obscured in a subtle web of obscurity only to be unravelled by patient thought, if indeed it is worth unravelling at all.

Sometimes I have tried to wonder what line I would have taken had the chorus of my critics sounded of blame rather than praise. At all events I hope I should not have been so thin-skinned as some of whom we have heard and read, who are absurdly sensitive, and begin to cry out almost before they are really hurt. We are told on Byron's testimony that the life of Keats, that "fiery particle, was snuffed out by a single article"; but I have never believed that story. The poor young poet was a "poitrinaire," and consumption claimed him as a victim quite early, in its sad and inevitable way. It does seem strange that Thackeray, with all his cynicism, real or supposed, and contempt for snobbery, would have been so fragile-minded, as he proclaimed himself to be. He believed that the sale of *Esmond* was checked by a notice in the *Times*, and articles in the *Observer* and the *Chronicle*, and other leading newspapers worried him so much that he was foolish enough to assail editorial infallibility with detailed answers. The poet Bunn scored more heavily by his reply to a series of spiteful attacks in *Punch*. Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" struck some heavy blows, and Trollope was reported to have killed Mrs. Proudie on once hearing a protest in the Athenæum Club at her too frequent appearances in his books. But on the

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other hand, I don't fancy that Wordsworth's placid complacency was in any way disturbed by the priggish sneers of the *Edinburgh Review*, and I would advise any one who courts public opinion through the medium of the press to thicken his hide and not mind pin-pricks. The great point is to be noticed at all; it is most depressing to be absolutely ignored, and even an unfavourable review may be of real service by letting the world know that you have come out into the open. Cynical people say that a sniff of impropriety sufficient to cause your book to be boycotted by the libraries, or your play to be banned by the censor, may be the turning-point towards the goal of success. And although this is not the class of reputation that most of us would like to acquire, we cannot deny its probable influence in giving a shove to a literary venture, which has stuck fast in the mud of failure.

When authors are specially annoyed by what is said about them, they take their revenge by wholesale abuse of critics generally, declaring they are incompetent and even venial, and not infrequently actuated by personal motives. I can quite understand the irritation of painters against some of those who sit in judgment on their works, for many of these gentlemen are not only unable to do the things they condemn, but even show themselves frequently unable even to understand what the artist is trying to do, and they have invented a species of highfalutin jargon, which irritates almost to frenzy all but the narrow clique to which they professionally belong. But those who claim to be the arbiters on literature, or that which passes as such, necessarily

belong to quite a different category. To begin with, their observations have to be cast in a cultured mould, often superior in form and substance to the works they criticise, and they are usually men devoted to the cause of letters, who are therefore entitled to give an opinion—and their suggestions are often most valuable. Speaking personally, I am grateful to some of those who have noticed my book for hints which I have gladly adopted, and for pointing out sins of omission and commission, of which I hope some day to be able to repent in a practical way. It is all very well to say that criticism is of no use, and that we are most of us too independent-minded to take the opinion of any one else as to what one should read or avoid. This may seem fine and spirited, and may pass muster in some intellectual centre where people have literary tendencies and talk largely about books; but how about those living in quiet country districts or Cranford-like villages, where no breath of culture stirs the stagnant waters? They must get their light and leading somewhere, and they greedily scan the *Spectator* and the *Athenæum* or the literary supplement of the *Times* before they order the contents of their book-box. So however much many of us might like to dispense with criticism, the public can't do without it.

Well! now that I have resumed my pen, what am I going to do with it? Personal reminiscences are about played out; and some of my critics showed so little sympathy with the confidential information I gave "anent" my infantile ailments, that I shall not pursue that subject further. For one needs to be a sprig of

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royalty or "a well-known person," or an exceptionally diabolical criminal, to induce the reading public to take a keen interest in the details of one's early life. So I must fall back on a subject which I really do understand, which never seems to grow stale, and I do so with some confidence, for it is only one who has spent a fair slice of his life, as I have done, in the House of Commons, who can accurately describe its inner workings. Therefore, not without misgivings, I place myself once more in competition with far abler writers who labour under the disadvantage of waiting outside the gate—but not disconsolate, like the Peri—and I propose to begin by giving my views as to the best way in which a man of ordinary intelligence can qualify himself to serve his country in Parliament. This would seem to open up a tempting, but I hope not irresistible vista of argument and reflection about public schools and universities, the influence of the classics, and a variety of allied topics, which will be wrangled over till the world ends. I do not give them the "go-by," because I have no opinions to offer. My mind is literally stuffed with them—crude and ill-digested though some of them may be. But I hesitate to inflict them on my readers, for I do not wish this book to be a mere receptacle for ideas, which I cannot get rid of in any other way, and I wish to run it on definite lines. Therefore I will start off by saying that as a matter of practical political equipment, I would place very high up a legal training. By this, I don't necessarily mean that a man should become a practising barrister. This tends to narrow his outlook, to make him expend his energy on small points, that

may be effective in the Law Courts, but which are heard with impatience in the wider atmosphere in the House of Commons. And hence the generally received opinion, with which I am inclined to agree, that there are too many lawyers there, and that their habits of talking to briefs, on this side or that, gives a sort of artificiality and absence of conviction to what they say, which fails to impress their hearers. What I mean is, that the habit of mind and the methods fostered by a study of the law, enables us to grasp quickly and readily small details in bills invented by lawyers and hard to understand by the ordinary layman. When these become acts later on, their absolute unintelligibility is a real weariness of the flesh to the ordinary mortal, and gives abundant occupation to the gentlemen of the long robe, who reap a rich harvest in unravelling the mysteries concocted by their own brethren. And to make confusion more confounded there is the abominable system known as legislature by reference, by which an obscure part of a particular bill or act is supposed to be cleared up by reference to a special section in some former act. You can easily understand the mental confusion, and the tedious searching which this involved. I have often admired the skill with which the Chairman of Committees deals with amendments suddenly flung at his head during the progress of some bill; for, at a moment's notice, he must decide whether they are out of order, or whether they interfere with any other amendment, or with the general scope and purpose of the bill.

If a man enters politics early, makes it his profession

and turns an ambitious eye towards the Front Bench, it is no doubt a good thing to pass through the usual mill in which young fellows are planed down to a dead level of somewhat monotonous uniformity, and be discharged from one of the regulation public schools to the equally regulated curriculum of the University. But an uneventful career either in work or play at the one, and a pass degree at the other, are practically useless. If you were distinguished as a cricketer or had a reputation as a shin-hacker, or if you took a high place in those ever-to-be-regretted days when classics and wranglers were hall-marked numerically, you may attract a little attention when you take your seat. And if you are a fellow, preferably of All Souls, or if in former days you hailed from Balliol and were one of Jowett's young men, that undoubtedly gives you a start, and you will be marked out for early promotion. And if you had the good luck to be president of either Union, or a favourite spouter on the platforms of the Eighty Club or the Primrose League, your maiden speech may be awaited with interest. A year or two in a public office is not ill-spent, but best of all is the real bit of good luck if you can get tacked on to a minister as his Parliamentary Private Secretary. You will thus get a peep behind the scenes, find out how official work is done or not done, and if you come off, do your business efficiently, and gain the confidence of your chief, something may be thrown in your direction at the next distribution of the loaves and fishes. But don't build too much on that; memories are short, political gratitude is rare. More pushing people come on the scene,

and in the end some great lady sails into the offing and upsets all your calculations, which then, like the best laid schemes of mice and men, "gang a-gley," and you may therefore be left outside to shiver and blow your fingers in the cold. The advantage of a liberal education, so-called, is supposed to be that it provides its possessor with a subtile, elastic and receptive mind, to pick up quickly and retain readily any knowledge that comes in his way. Those of us who have made a study of that very useless person, the average and undistinguished public schoolboy, with his scorn of learning, and his slavish reliance on "the governor" (whom in his heart he despises) to shove him through the rest of his career, or that even more helpless product of civilisation, the pass man of Oxford or Cambridge, may venture to doubt this. The most fatal thing for success in the House of Commons is to be a prig, which has been described as an animal overstuffed for its size. Definition is difficult, but we all know this type in St. Stephen's or elsewhere, and although the old Oxford manner is nearly extinct, traces of it survive, and occasionally we meet the high flute-like voice, the aggressive nose, the eyes beaming with sweetness and light, and the supercilious gaze and pitying smile with which he surveys those mortals who have not shared his assured advantages. The House of Commons is an absolutely democratic place, snobbery is unknown, people are taken entirely on their merits, without much heed to rank, position, or prestige; and if you wish to make a good impression at the start, suppress any trace of intellectual superiority, even if you think you are

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entitled to show it. My observation is that people about half-way across the journey of life, men of affairs, who have been working at something definite, and have been trained in what John Burns suggestively calls the University of the World, are most successful. They know something at first-hand, and can tell it simply and practically to their listeners, and that is the real way to obtain and retain the ear of such a fastidious yet sympathising assembly. And what is even of greater importance; that is the way to catch the Speaker's and the Chairman of Committees' eye, for these judicial and judicious officials with admirable tact choose from the covey of ambitious speakers who spring into the air when some one sits down, the competitor whom they believe the House wishes to hear, and who has something really useful to add to the debate. Chamberlain, Bright, Cobden, H. Fowler, John Burns, and some of the leading Labour members, who are always heard with respect, had received no definite academic training, but had been intimately mixed up with public affairs, in which they played a conspicuous part.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO GET INTO PARLIAMENT

THIS seems simple enough to some people. It is a case of "open sesame," and they walk in, perhaps unopposed. Now this seems cheap, attractive, and free from worrying complications; but I am sure it is a mistake for the first time of asking. A good tough contest gives confidence in yourself, as well as of your supporters to you, it stimulates their loyalty, stiffens their backs, brings out your powers, educates you in your business, and keeps the organisation in good working order. But very few people are let off so easy as that, unless your local influence is overwhelmingly strong, your purse fairly deep, and your abilities above the average. The most trying of all things is to be sent, as the authorities will often send you, to fight a hopeless battle to sharpen your wits, and see what is in you. And even worse is the still more disheartening process of having to nurse a constituency held by a rich man. A friend of mine, happily well endowed, told me it cost him over £3000 a year to do this, and in the end he did not win the seat, but got in elsewhere after a big expenditure of brains and money. If you are just an ordinary person of no special importance, you usually have to impress your claims on the judgment of the 20, or 40, or 200 who are selected to select you, and

from whose decision there is no appeal, and then you may have to submit to the somewhat ignominious ordeal of a preaching match, like that by which candidates on the "short leet" are selected to occupy the pulpit of a Scotch church. I once assisted at one of these performances, when I went with a friend to help him to woo the affections of a Scotch constituency. There was an honourable obligation—not, I fear, rigidly followed by the attractive wife of the candidate—that there should be no canvassing, nor attempt to do anything more than place the bare facts of the politics of the moment before the electors, and the result was flabby and pointless. My man being new to the job did not know how to talk round the under crusts, and his style of speaking was rather stilted and academic. Of the other candidates, one was discredited by the unfounded rumour that he was a Government nominee, and sent down by the Whips, and the third, an exceptionally powerful lawyer, out-talked both the others, and sailed in easily.

My own experience is worth recording. In former times Aberdeenshire was undivided, and had only one member. Sir James Elphinstone was in possession of the seat, and holding it, as he thought, by a sort of patent right, his fury was great, and was expressed in forcible quarter-deck language, when its stability was assailed by a juvenile champion of liberalism. Lofty was the scorn poured upon this presumptuous youth whom the doughty admiral hardly condescended even to name; but dire was the surprise and consternation when David fired his final shot and Goliath went down before

it. Young Dingwall Fordyce represented the entire county with ability and success until his sadly premature death, when it was divided, and McCombie, the greatest cattle breeder in Scotland, and a sturdy Scot of much individualism and integrity, came out as a candidate. Rumour will have it that he first stood as a Tory, had canvassed the farmers in that interest, and had their pledges safely recorded in a "leathern bookie." But the high and mighty lairds kicked so sharply at such a lowering of their social tone that McCombie promptly changed over to the other side, and carried his pledges with him. And in those days it apparently mattered little to the farmers to which camp he belonged as long as he was one of their own class, and prepared with first-hand knowledge to represent them. But now the Liberals made their protest at the degradation, as they considered it, of having a rent-payer instead of a rent-receiver as their mouthpiece, and they came to my father to ask him to stand. I remember in my half-fledged way sympathising with the strikers, and I did my best to persuade him to take action, but he was far too good a Liberal for that, and flatly refused, and McCombie, who was a personal friend of his, and respected him as what he called a "just landlord," walked in, I think, unopposed. But he soon found out his mistake. He never took kindly to the life, and his professional interests suffered so much neglect that if he did not become bankrupt, he came very near it, and he was nothing like the power in the House that he expected, for his somewhat uncouth talk did not catch on, and when, for "greater accuracy," to paraphrase

the Speaker's statement on reading the Queen's speech to the House, he had provided himself with a copy of his own, which he read from the quiet security of his hat, he rather resented being told this was a breach of order. But his defence was a perfectly good one. "There's a hantle o' them read their speeches," he replied—and he might, when seeing Cabinet Ministers calmly turning over the leaves of their written discourses from the Front Bench, have repeated the well-known saying, "What in the captain's only a choleric word, in the soldier's sheer blasphemy"—and so he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and St. Stephen's knew him no more. Then a successor had to be appointed, and on the announcement being made, I rushed off to Aberdeen, and told the Liberal Association that it was not my intention to press my claims against those of Lord Douglas Gordon, who had been selected as candidate. To pay off an old score against the Tory wire-pullers who had run Edward Ross, the great rifle-shot, but perfectly immature politician, against him, a factious fight which cost him £600, McCombie took the field with energy, went everywhere with the candidate, occupied the chair at every meeting, spoke, canvassed, and at last shoved him in well at the top of the poll, and beating a man in every way pre-eminently qualified to be a member of Parliament, Col. Innes of Learney, now the acknowledged "grand old man" of Deeside, who from his long experience, ability, integrity and knowledge of agricultural matters would have been a useful adviser to any government. After this little enterprise, Ross, whose knowledge of

law was probably confined to the consumption of various dinners and a scrape through an examination, was made a Commissioner in Lunacy, and no doubt performed with reasonable efficiency the not very exacting duty of following about his medical colleagues, dotting their i's and crossing their t's, and seeing that the mad folk got enough to eat, had plenty of sheets and blankets. And McCombie received or was going to receive a testimonial, but when he heard that it was going to take the shape of a service of plate or some such kind of material aspect, he hinted that he would rather have it in money, and a good round sum was handed to him—more fortunate than another man whose portrait was painted and presented, and who was then called upon to make good the considerable deficiency that remained after the accounts were made up.

Lord Douglas' heart was never in his work, although he was by no means deficient in ability; but his interests were in the sporting line, and he did not take kindly to the discussion of agricultural matters, so, on the first opportunity, he too beat a retreat, and I was asked with four others to place my name before the electors, with results which I have elsewhere described.

There were other competitors, both tenant farmers, when Sir William Forbes was selected, and unhappily for him he was successful in the ballot. The cost, although moderate enough in those days of unrestricted expenditure, was too big for a man whose property was somewhat seriously burdened, and the work of the contest, beset as he was by experienced hecklers, worried him, and I doubt if he got much fun out of it

—and, as he succeeded to his title of Lord Sempill soon afterwards, it was a pity that he had not waited to gratify his political ambitions by a seat in the House of Lords, where his high character and shrewd common-sense would have been appreciated. But it is by no means a matter of course that he would have got there, for Scotch peers are placed in a curiously anomalous position. They have to be elected by their brethren as representatives, and as that is a compact Tory body a Liberal has as much chance of entering the Kingdom of Heaven through the eye of a needle as reaching the interior of that august chamber by the votes of his compeers; and once in you have to stand re-election from time to time; and not long ago Lord Torphichen, who had committed the heinous crime of voting for the Budget, was ignominiously “chucked out” when his case came up for revision. When it was desired to provide Lord Reay, one of the ablest Liberal lords, with a seat, it was necessary to give him an English peerage. It is surely time to place the Scotch on the same level with the Irish, and enable them to fight for a seat in the Commons if they cannot find one in the “other place.” Soon after my election I was presented to the late King—then Prince of Wales—at a ball at Lord Huntly’s, and this was his first remark: “I hope you’ll make a better member than Briggs did.” For that was the nickname of my predecessor. I don’t quite remember what my repartee was; but I fear it was not like that of the man in the play, who said that “Many of my best impromptus took me at least three weeks to prepare.”

In former days young men of promise were saved much trouble and expense by the system of "rotten boroughs." It will be remembered that Gladstone got his first start as a nominee of the Duke of Newcastle, and although the system undoubtedly deserved its title, there was a little to be said on the other side. But the Reform made a clean sweep of these cobwebbed survivals of privilege and corruption, and the sooner the last of the fancy franchises follows them into the dust-heap the better. I always proudly remember having seconded my old friend Edmund Robertson, afterwards Lord Lochee, in a motion for abolition of the University seats many years ago, which we carried at an evening sitting, and the realisation of our hopes has now at last come into the near horizon of practical politics.

I have never ceased to wonder why some people, apparently endowed with every necessary quality, never can get into the House, whereas others apparently far more slenderly equipped with brains and the faculty of using them, simply push the door open on oiled hinges. I could mention, if it were convenient to do so, several people with money, interest, oratorical capacity, and the record of good service, hopelessly distanced by what I must call duffers. There is just a something, a personality, a touch of sympathy, a measure of personal charm which outweighs the more solid qualities of the other. We all know how quite plain women catch hold of us and grip us to them with hooks of steel—why, we have sometimes only the faintest notion.

CHAPTER III

MY CONTESTS OUT OF AND IN THE HOUSE

THE earliest attempt at a political flight must always be an anxious one. Some people approach it with wings already partially stretched by minor efforts. They have studied their subjects, have history at their finger-tips, and the power of talk at the extremity of their tongues. They have been leading lights at their school debating societies, or later on at the University, and they have perambulated the country and spoken from various platforms with greater or less success as the missionaries of some of the societies formed to train young men, as well as to form public opinion. So the uprearing towards the perpendicular does not necessarily mean to them an evaporation of ideas. But my case was far different. I had been devoted to medicine since my early manhood, and had given not the slightest attention to that which was eventually to become my life's work. In fact, so entirely unfledged was I that, during my Rugby days, when I was canvassed by the local agent of the Tory party, I very nearly fell a victim to his wiles. But by this time I had stiffened my back, and remembered my father, a sturdy Radical at a time when the adoption of such principles was most injurious socially, and other of my relations who had done good political service, and I enthusiastically nerved myself for the

battle. There had been three pretenders for election on the other side, two able and representative tenant farmers, and Sir William Forbes, a jolly good fellow, popular all round, who it was thought would catch the ear of his hearers and their votes by his joviality and mother wit. But he calculated without his host, for expert hecklers followed him to every meeting, and one of them called Mackintosh cross-examined him about some complicated foreign affairs then pending in so skilful a way as to obtain special notice in the pages of *Truth*—and the slender veneer of knowledge which the candidate could put on became thinner and thinner as the contest proceeded. I had only three weeks for preparation; but I had passed a good many examinations, and had acquired the faculty of cramming for them, and so, devoting myself heart and soul to the work, I stuffed myself with a mass of “fine confused feeding,” imperfectly digested, perhaps, but quite available for daily use. The election was to be fought primarily on the iniquities of the other side, exposed with matchless vigour by Gladstone in his Midlothian campaign, and then on the annexation of the Transvaal, and the Afghan War. We were all very hot for the immediate recall of Sir Bartle Frere, whom we regarded as the villain of the contemporary drama, but possibly better counsels prevailed, for he was a man of high character, lofty ideals and of a careful and conscientious nature; and looking back on these times with a dispassionate eye, I am not sure that some, at least, of his policy was not right, and that its adoption might have saved future complications. But on the second head my opinion is

unchanged, founded as it was on an admirable book by Sir E. Hobhouse. From some curious oriental twist of that mysterious Hebrew Disraeli's mind, it had apparently become necessary to pick a quarrel with the Ameer of Afghanistan, and Lord Lytton was sent out as Viceroy to do it, the excuse being the reception of a couple of Russian envoys, and some difficulty about ours, and the ruling potentate was brutally told he was like an earthenware pipkin between two brass pots, and that resistance would smash him. This policy was carried out in defiance of the protests of Sir F. F. Haynes, Commander-in-Chief, and Sir F. Pollock, Commissioner of Peshawar, resigned rather than carry it out, and the mischievous part played by Colley is well told in Bosworth Smith's life of Lord Lawrence. This glib, clever military prig was sent to interview the Nestor of Punjab's affairs, and received his protests with the insolent intimation that he did not need his old-fashioned advice, but only came for information on some points of detail. And the disastrous game was carried out to the bitter end, with the result of shaking faith in the integrity of our promises, and sowing the seeds of distrust which bring up a sour crop from time to time. But one result was the downfall of the Beaconsfield Government and the recall of Lord Lytton, who was never a success in India, but partly redeemed his impaired reputation by a diplomatic residence in the more congenial atmosphere of Paris.

And now began a period of great physical strain and mental effort. I worked my campaign from the Imperial Hotel in Aberdeen, and cannot even now bear

to see that handsomely upholstered bedroom, where so many anxious nights and off-days were spent in so much strenuous preparation for the speeches which crowded in upon me by perfect battalions. Some of my work enabled me to reach the base of operations at night, but more usually I had to put up at some of the excellent little inns for which the western division is famous, and where I found wholesome food, well cooked and served, and cordial receptions from hosts and hostesses, among whom worthy old Mrs. Smith of Lumsden village must ever remain in affectionate memory; and I have also to make grateful recognition of the invariable kindness, courtesy and hospitality shown me by my political opponents. The programme was generally pretty much the same—an early start by train—one meeting before lunch, one after, and if there was time for dinner, a hasty snack before two more; the time during the drives by train or “machine” from place to place being amply filled by considering what to say next, by reading what my rival had said with a view to reply, or in consultations with my agent and leading supporters, with perhaps an occasional nap to refresh the jaded brain. Irregular meals, the worry of cranks, the loquacity of chairmen who sometimes exhausted the subject and the patience of the audience before I rose, and the anxiety of mind inseparable from the fact that I stood up as a target for the cockshies of the meeting, and the dread that the hecklers might get the better of me were all drains on one’s strength. But nothing surprised me more than the way in which these ingenious people, well primed as they often were with

searching and ingenious questions, usually failed to follow up their advantage and discomfit the foe. Over and over again I have seen the weak point in my armour, and wondered how the rapier-point missed its mark—as once when I was taking the chair for a friend, he was asked the question which I always found unanswerable : “Is it fair that the Irish are to be allowed to sit in the House of Commons to interfere with our affairs, when we are to have no further say in theirs?” To this he replied that his remedy would be total exclusion, and this was well received. And the heckler who had by this time lost the ear of the audience, also lost his head and was shut up by the meeting. The real answer is, of course, that by a process of devolution, strictly local affairs shall be decided locally, and as in future they will no longer come up for consideration in the Imperial Parliament, there will be nothing left for the Irish to worry about; and, of course, as they will continue to contribute to the national taxation they have a perfect right to attend and see how their money is to be spent. Or in other words, that heckler did not follow up with the crushing retort : But would not this mean separation and a negative of the fundamental Liberal principle that there should be no taxation without representation?

Towards the end of my campaign I developed an almost alarming fluency, greatly encouraged by the remark of the reporters that Dr. F. spoke much in the same strain as at former meetings, and directed their attention exclusively to the cross-examination, while the remarks of “a voice” and the interjection of the inevitable drunk man are invariably reproduced ver-

batim; and practice also enabled me to present a bold front to the most hostile verbal critic, and couch my replies with the bland, or sometimes half, sometimes complete knowledge, polite evasion, and promise of careful consideration which generally enabled me to tide over most of my difficulties. But at this time there were some burning questions. First and foremost the game laws, which undoubtedly needed mending, and the abolition of which was frequently demanded, for the tenant farmers were very sore with Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, whose myriads of rabbits fed freely on the surrounding crops, and no adequate compensation could be had. But I always stood firm to my belief that any such drastic change would do harm by removing the inducement to landlords to live on their estates, and enabling them to replenish their too often reduced exchequer by letting the sporting rights. And not long afterwards what was at first called the Hares and Rabbits Bill was passed, giving ample compensation to the occupier of the land and making him joint owner of the ground game. And then came Cameron's Act making shootings held by the proprietor liable for assessment equally to those which are let, and giving the very complete answer that the reversal of the game laws, the oppressive action of which had been removed, would absolutely render bankrupt many of the heavily taxed Highland districts. Luckily my opponent took the same line that I did, but if an inconvenient Radical had inserted himself between us with a different programme, there is no saying what the result might have been. As it happened, there never really was any doubt, and on

a never-forgotten day I stood on the steps of the music-hall, and afterwards in my committee-room, proudly receiving congratulations as the member for West Aberdeenshire.

Only two out of my six elections after my first deserve mention. In 1902 I nearly had a *débâcle*, and you might have knocked me down with a feather, or even a lighter weapon, when, after a hard battle in which I thought everything was going right, but those behind the scenes thought differently, some one burst into my agent's room and said, "You are in by 80." I could not believe my ears, for I had calculated on a majority of at least 800, but a little reflection told me what powerful forces were working against me. To begin with, whilst I was attending to my business at St. Stephen's, my opponent, a good, straight and popular man, had been working hard among the people, lecturing and button-holing, and making the most of the bad, though superficially plausible case he had to present; next, and even more important, my agent, a smart, clever young lawyer, had been obliged, by the terms of a new partnership, to give up political agency, and his successor, although a great personal friend and a good fellow, was not so sound on some of the articles of our creed as I should have wished. And third and worst, disestablishment was in the air, and the Ministers were fighting desperately for their loaves and fishes, which had far more to do with their violent proceedings than anything connected with religion. They literally raved and foamed at the mouth, and nearly writhed over their pulpit edges in opposition to

a movement which has been admitted by a bishop to have greatly strengthened the national church in Ireland, and although I regret to say it, I cannot refrain from placing on record that during my twenty-five years of public life, the only really nasty things that rather ruffled the surface of otherwise harmonious contests were uttered by clergymen of the gospel, whose charity and good will could not stand the bare possibility of being reduced to the same level as their dissenting brethren. What I complain of quite as much as these tirades from the Tory clique occupying established pulpits, and who, if disestablishment ever comes about, will have largely contributed to it by their obstructive tactics, is the attitude of their Free Church brethren, who with honourable exceptions proclaimed that politics was outside their sphere, and so would give us no help. The question is pretty much asleep just now, and I doubt whether it will ever fully wake up again, for the old seceders are rapidly dying out, rejunction is in the air, and the more moderate churchmen are beginning to see that religion will be helped rather than harmed by detachment from the State. But if it ever does, in spite of the ability and popularity of my successor, it will take all his time to retain his seat.

The case of Wales seems to be quite as strong as that of Ireland, which, as already pointed out, has been a notable success. The Church of the principality has long since ceased to be a thoroughly representative one, as so well pointed out by McKenna, and the only point which I think argumentative on the other side is whether it would not be desirable, in the interest of

peace and quietness, to leave the endowments available for ecclesiastical purposes, for they are mostly private benefactions, and do not amount to a very large sum.

He would be a bold man who would meddle with the Church of England. There are large vested interests, and the case of the cathedrals, which really have a national importance, and could not be handed over for maintenance to the casual offerings of the neighbourhood. But on the other hand, the childish perverseness of the clergy in fighting against constituted authority, and the natural disinclination of their spiritual superiors to put into operation, at their own expense, laws the interpretation of which is doubtful and obscure, would suggest the removal of State trammels as an easy remedy. For my own part, these silly squabbles about vestments and other prohibited things seem quite beneath the dignity of true religion, and I would give every one a free hand to do just what they like in these matters. This is, or was, until Trade Unionism put itself legally above the law of the land, and if any one does not like incense and candles, and decorated altars, and all the other ceremonious developments of ritual, he can stay at home and read the *Observer* or the *Sunday Times*. All these things, in my humble judgment, appeal to the senses and the emotions, and are therefore of distinct service, and the seventy or eighty sects which split up our religion surely do good by stimulating enthusiasm, even if it assumes a somewhat drab and dreary complexion, and stirs up the too often stagnant pools of orthodoxy.

There seems some possibility, if not immediate prob-

ability, of reunion of the Churches, and Lord Balfour of Burleigh's really magnificent and statesmanlike speech delivered to the last General Assembly has taken a long step towards realising the dream of Guthrie and others. But there are difficulties in the way, and a big boulder lies right across it in the shape of the Wee Frees, who are quite ready to upset the coach a second time. Yet the high and dry vicars and rectors and archdeacons, and big and minor canons so dear to Trollope lovers, when they look down their aristocratic noses at the Baptists and Primitive Methodists who crowd their bare conventicles, whilst their more richly endowed and decorated churches are only full of empty pews, may well be unable to answer Temple's scathing query, "Why?"

The other election which specially lingers in my memory was a three-cornered one, always an anxious and possibly a disagreeable affair. It came about in this way. An excitable constituent, when I was somewhat raw to the job, was annoyed by an answer I gave about the game laws, and thought he would ease his smarting toes by giving me a triangular run for my money. So after searching the county in vain for a so-called Labour candidate, he hied him to Lanarkshire and sprinkled salt on the tail of a tenant called Quentin Kerr, a valorous tub-thumping spouter who, if he had not stood for Parliament before, had been spoken of in that connection. At first everything was *couleur de rose*. The most extravagant promises were made, a new heaven and a new earth were to be constructed, and every human institution either reformed away altogether

or reconstructed so as to suit the views of the individual questioner—and naturally I felt a little uneasy, for the orator had an absolute cataract of words, and their effect was undoubted. But people soon began to find that he made the same speech on every occasion, and the Press, which was rather in his favour at first, began to swing round. And at several heckling matches I had decidedly the best of it, and beat the syndicate of three conspirators, who sat and consulted together, and rose up in succession after each disconcerting answer. The climax came at Kennay, when I chaffed their heads off and turned the meeting entirely in my favour, telling the ringleader that as he could not see a joke, I would gladly perform the surgical operation on him gratis and under chloroform; and when he complained that his speeches had not been properly reported, I reminded him that he could not claim a monopoly of the press columns, but if he would start a newspaper, in spite of the shortness of life and the length of his tale (tail), I would endeavour to read all that he said. Not very brilliant humour, perhaps, but most effective at the moment, and when all was over at eleven o'clock, and my brother and I drove to Inverurie and enjoyed a good dinner and a bottle of Heidsieck, we both agreed that the back of the conspiracy was broken. People began to see that Kerr could not carry out all his promises, and when an opportune correspondent pointed out inaccuracies in statements he made about some crofters on his farm the game was up, and I romped in an easy winner by a majority of 1000 over both my opponents. Some people thought that after this I might have been

allowed a walk over, but my position was so much strengthened by this splendid victory that I disregarded all that happened afterwards, and I took the line which I would recommend to others of never grumbling at bogus contests, but rather welcoming them as a test of the loyalty of my supporters, and as a possibly necessary, but at all events inevitable, outcome of the responsible position which I was honoured to hold.

But it is just possible that this over-confidence nearly contributed to my downfall, for the perilous approach to a *débâcle* which I have already described was largely due, in addition to other causes, to a false sense of security, a want of personal energy and good organisation; and I am quite certain that if the other side had thoroughly realised the state of matters they would have taken another long and strong pull and dragged the rope of the tug-of-war safely over to the winning side. And in that case, as one of my leading supporters said, it would have been "Sedan" with me, for I am quite certain that I would not have been invited to take the field again.

I was assured, though I never believed it, that I would not have been opposed were it not for a most unfortunate unnecessary amendment which Sir Wilfrid Lawson introduced against the advice of his friends. It ran us and put some of us in an awkward hole, for although we were opposed to the war, we were pledged to support the Government in carrying it on, and C.-B. walked out of the House. I had made up my mind to vote against it, but I was told that our leader attached great importance to his action, and had

made up his mind to resign if he were not properly supported. So I too abstained from voting, a thing I had hardly ever done before on an important occasion, and I was assured that this working against my better judgment cost me £800.

Representing, as I did, a large and most important agricultural constituency, I naturally directed my energies to that class of questions, and I was much disappointed when I could not get an opportunity of delivering a carefully prepared speech on the Agricultural Holdings Bill, which for the first time gave the farmer compensation for his inexhausted improvements, and therefore increased the vigour and liberality with which he treated the soil. But though I rose continuously during the debates, "I never could catch the Speaker's eye," and deeply regretted that I had squandered my maiden speech on the, to my constituents, far less important subject of vaccination. The Crofters' Bill enacted the provision of fair rent fixed by a land court, and fixity of tenure, and gave my Lumphanan tenant, Barclay, the chance, aided by Macfarlane, Dr. Clark and others, of fighting a strenuous battle for the smallholders, whose rents were largely reduced by the commission, and who have built their own houses, greatly improved their land, and become honourable and independent members of society now that they have got their freedom. And when I visited Skye and the Lewis some time afterwards with Sir George Campbell, I was surprised at the good crops that were raised on most unpromising soil, at the interior comfort of the miserable-looking hovels occupied by some of the stal-

wart men, handsome women and healthy children that populated those bleak moorlands. The Smallholders' Act, always to be associated with the name of Lord Pentland, who steered it triumphantly through shoals and breakers which threatened destruction, founded on the same lines, and, I believe, destined to have the same success, is based on the principle, which I advocated on every possible occasion in the House of Commons, that the Crofters' Act should be extended to Aberdeenshire and other northern counties.

I also naturally took much interest in the Ground Game Bill, and carried an important amendment giving farmers the right to pursue rabbits into rough bits of whin or scrub on their land. This was opposed by Harcourt, who said it was good fun to beat through that kind of ground, but met with support from Courtney, whose weighty advocacy carried the day. I tried hard to get deer included in the term ground game, but the sportsmen were too strong for me and I failed. I am not sure, however, that under the present law a farmer is not entitled to defend himself from these destructive creatures when they come foraging on a moonlight night among his turnips. For they are not game, and only become property when their carcasses are removed from the land. The report of the Deer Forest Commission recommended that all these sporting sanctuaries should be wired in, but sometimes this is not done, or the protection is insufficient from the action of frost or snow or wind, and then there is good ground of complaint, and the sufferers are apt to take action and polish off the intruder.

I also put my name on a Bill intended to enable a farmer to protect himself from the ravages of grouse, which, as any one can see by examining their crops, eat an enormous quantity of grain when oats are in stook near the moor. But it never came to anything, and I was roundly denounced by my sporting friends for putting my hand to such a measure. But it was only carrying into legal effect what my father did voluntarily when he gave a tenant whom he could trust a licence to enable him to shoot the grouse which came in overwhelming numbers to gorge themselves at his expense. And as he was a good farmer and scrupulously honest the family larder was efficiently replenished, and he not only prevented the "Highland Raiders" from filling their crops at the expense of his, but had excellent sport and a fair proportion of the spoil.

I sat on a committee on the Midwives' Bill, and was horrified by the revelations concerning the drunken and incompetent women who were sometimes found in their professional ranks, and who by their gross incapacity and neglect of all hygienic precautions exacted annually a heavy toll of human life. The result was an Act providing for registration, which has worked well without friction and with great benefit to poor womanhood at a peculiarly vulnerable time. The Shop Hours Regulation Bill, which I also helped through the committee stage, has just passed into law. At the request of the chairman, Sir John Lubbock, that active and philanthropic helper of many good and useful social measures, I arranged for the medical evidence, and some leading physicians gave emphatic testimony to the evils

of bad air, prolonged standing, and mental and physical strain involved by the conditions of life met with in the narrow and constricted conditions under which the smaller class of employees had to do their work. But vested interests and the strangling influence of cranks and theoretical faddists have until now prevented legislation on a subject of great and even vital importance to the welfare of our race. I was very glad to be able to vote in favour of opening museums and picture galleries on Sunday, and I did so with special conviction, because it provided the opportunity of visiting these institutions, for which the people are taxed, and therefore belong to them as a right; whilst not necessarily interfering with church attendance, it will probably largely diminish the revenue of the public-houses. I attended the first opening of the National Gallery, and never saw a more respectable, orderly or appreciative crowd, and my opinion of the wisdom of my action in helping these worthy people to inspect their own property was by no means shaken by a round robin addressed to me by the clergy of my constituency setting forth in violent terms their disapproval of what I had done. I had previously ascertained that the employees of these collections were only too willing, by arrangement among themselves, to forego their own weekly holiday, so that the only argument against my vote worthy of consideration was cut away; and after preparing a detailed argumentative reply to the intolerant priests, I tore it up, and let their manifesto follow it into the waste-paper basket, without even a bare acknowledgment, and I heard no more of the matter.

I always spoke on the army estimates, advocating the claims of my old colleagues of the Medical Department to obtain the substantial rank which was necessary to give them proper recognition on active service, and enable them to preserve discipline when in command of the Army Service Corps. And in conjunction with my old friend and brother officer, the late Colonel Heneage Legge, I used to advocate the better feeding and treatment of the recruit who did not get the extra messing allowance to which he was entitled when he joined the colours, and was then imperfectly fed when beginning a new and harassing life, with gymnastic and drill training making heavy demands on the physical vigour of growing lads. And the falling off in the number of recruits, with frequent desertions, were due, first, to the pure and unmitigated swindle by which the so-called free ration was not a free ration at all, but the unhappy victim of War Office meanness found he had to put his hand into his pocket and pay for the milk, sugar, butter and other little essentials to smarten up the bare cup of coffee provided for him by official regulation. The second cause was the dreary and depressing way in which the examination of candidates for entrance to the army was conducted in St. George's Barracks; the bare, forbidding room, the pea-soup-looking bath, everything to give a deterrent effect to the ordeal which many of those about to endure probably thought themselves great fools for ever going through. And the remedy seemed so simple.

Another interesting point which I used to press home was the bad arrangement of the soldiers' food. A fair

allowance of meat for dinner after the meagre breakfast, then nothing till five o'clock, when another jorum of "weirsh" coffee was served out, and nothing till next morning. The natural result being that the abounding conviviality and hospitality of the civilian to the red coat acted heavily on an empty stomach, causing a bad head and corkscrew-like progression to the guard-room, from thence to the orderly-room, and finally to the cells. But nothing was ever done, for the War Office are hidebound with red tape routine, until the necessity is forced upon them too late to make concession to reason and public opinion, and to go a bit with the times.

The lunacy laws gave me the opportunity for an annual speech, for I used to delight in comparing our Scotch arrangements most favourably with those in operation south of the Tweed. In England there are an already small number of medical commissioners, and an equal number of lawyers, who are usually jobbed into their posts as the reward for political service, and whose sole justification for existence, if it can be called such, is that they see that the asylums are properly furnished and the inmates sufficiently fed. Their medical colleagues, no doubt, do their work conscientiously, but it is a harassing and depressing business, and the inspection of the mad people must be almost a farce. I have seen something of the working of private asylums, and have the most complete confidence in those who keep them, but the temptation to retain a lucrative lunatic treading the border-line of recovery might some day become irresistible, and the machinery

to prevent abuse cannot be considered adequate. Now in Scotland, small country as it is, we have as many commissioners as in England, and those on the legal side are only assistant-commissioners, *und funktionieren unentgeltlich*.

But the thing to which I recur with the most lively satisfaction is the part I took in the first debate on the opium question. The opium traffic so called was denounced in most unmeasured terms by the "unco guid" and by a rich and powerful society led by their secretary, Mr. Alexander, against whose ability and integrity I have not a word to say. And I had my full share of the odium from highly respectable people whose own lives did not bear subsequent investigation, and the full canting intolerance of the Church was brought to bear upon me. But remembering the fate of Cranmer, I did not budge an inch, but stood firm on every platform, and I would advise all politicians, new or matured, to do the same. For constituents hate nothing so much as ratting, and when you have once formed a definite opinion, stick to it unless you can be convinced that you were wrong, and then never be ashamed to say so.

Ricord, the great French surgeon, when he made an acrobatic *volte face* on a great pathological question, said, "L'homme absurde est celui qui ne change jamais"; and I think it is Harcourt's dictum that if a man has an unalterable opinion he is an unalterable ass. I was able to show that the so-called opium war could not be fairly so called, for it was merely a war of tariffs, and opium was only one among many; and when we

asked the Chinese if they would like it omitted they said no. The total suppression of its use would be bitterly resented by the Indian chiefs, many of whom derive their main revenues from it, smuggling would practically go on unchecked, and India, as pointed out by the cool-headed and sagacious Lord Ripon, would be made bankrupt, and it would be wicked and cruel to saddle either a poor Oriental country or our already overtaxed people to gratify the faddism of a rich society, a salaried secretary, and an army of self-satisfied cranks bleating out their opinions in the sweet security of Exeter Hall. But further I pointed out that the physical dangers of opium had been grossly exaggerated. I do not for one moment pretend that excess here, as in ordinary food and drink, will not do harm, but it is absurd to compare its evil effects with that of alcohol, which can be consumed unchecked, and which carries in its train death, disease, crime and misery carried down to future generations. The opium-eater lies in quiet stupor; he does not beat his wife, nor kill or wound in his blind frenzy, and it is well known that the Sikhs, the most powerful and martial race in India, use it habitually as a tonic and stimulant, and would bitterly resent being deprived of it. And I am proud to say that every one of these conclusions were confirmed by the almost unanimous report of a Royal Commission on which sat a most able and experienced medical man, and whose conclusions have never been seriously disputed. And some years afterwards Sir Henry Fowler, as he was then, effectively smashed an attempt to reopen the whole question in the House of

Commons, and obtained a handsome majority against the cranks.

But I also sat on the most important committee of the House, *ad hoc*, and helped the chairman and others to arrange the private bill, grand and select committees; and it was no easy task to select men best qualified for the work, and especially the chairmen, on whose tact, discretion and knowledge and experience so much of the success of these queerly constituted tribunals depends.

Then for six years I was in charge of the private business of the House, which gave me a kind of semi-official status, but the work was really most unsatisfactory. I was compelled to be in the House every day at three o'clock precisely to read out mechanically the dates of the private bills, after arrangement with the agents, who with the best intentions in the world were not always as punctual or well informed as they might have been. And I never was allowed to say a single word of explanation, for that was always done by the chairman of committees, and sometimes, if there happened to be a long debate on one of them, I was detained at the House perhaps over the dinner-hour till the others came. But my crowning honour was when I was unanimously elected Chairman of the Scotch Liberal members, and this I held quite successfully, I think, till my retirement.

The liquor question has always been a thorny one, and would have been settled long ago if the cranks had not prevented Bruce, years ago, from carrying his Bill.

We have had Forbes Mackenzie's Act with the definition of the *bona fide* traveller, and various faddish tamperings with the liberty of the subject, which makes me sometimes wonder whether it would not be best to have free trade in drink, and let people do as they please. Compensation has always been a stumbling-block, but public opinion would never allow people who are carrying on a perfectly legitimate and legalised battle in a perfectly reasonable way, to be deprived of the means of livelihood which they were tacitly led to believe would be annually renewed on good behaviour. The plan to which I have always given my own adhesion is that of local option, which allows each locality, by a certain regulated majority, to decide how many, if any, public-houses it wishes to have. Whether we shall ever attain to this consummation so devoutly to be wished seems doubtful, for Bung is powerful, and budget makers have found before now how dangerous it is to try and extract revenue from a commodity so firmly enshrined in the stomachs, and that is not very far from the hearts of the British people.

On reviewing with a dispassionate and fairly judicial eye my political career, I cannot associate it with anything of importance. I passed no Bill into an Act, my name is associated with no measure or amendment. There is the Cowper-Temple clause, the Kenyon-Slaney clause, some one else's amendment, but no Farquharson anything. My name is not blazoned on the roll of fame because I sat on the Committee of the Science and Arts Department, and helped John Burns to get the dangerous houses for the officials removed from the risk of fire,

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etc., pulling things together when Sir John Gorst resigned the chair because he could not get his own way, or because by persistently hammering away I helped to get the National Gallery detached from St. George's Barracks and from some shops which were separated by a narrow wall from our priceless collection.

CHAPTER IV

THE PASSING OF THE PRIVATE MEMBER

SUCH is the growth of Cabinet power and official influence, that those outside the sacred circle of either are bound to go to the wall and be flattened there, and in the course of years the man who has taken the Government shilling, and who never gets even the stripes of a corporal, will become as extinct for all active practical purposes as the dodo or the great auk and its proverbial egg. Do not think, however, that I am going to rail at party government. Leave this to high and mighty intellectual magnates like Wells and Belloc and others, who add to their denunciation of our present political machinery a thin veneer of cheap and nasty socialism, and the oft-made accusation that members of Parliament are necessarily as such untrustworthy and even dishonest. I can forgive Mr. Wells, for he has no practical knowledge of what he writes about, and a great deal should be forgiven to the author of *Kipps*. But the other critic has himself been a member of Parliament, although his short career was not a very satisfactory one, and he might have been described like a much bigger man, as sitting on both sides of the House. Still I think as a matter of policy, as well as of decency, it is best not to foul your own nest even if you don't continue to occupy it. And I would like to put these

two superior beings in a couple of chairs in my room, and ask them as a matter of practical business how you are going to carry on the government of the country in an assembly free from all rules of order, of procedure, or of discipline. I should wait for the answer with intense interest, and perhaps some amusement.

Every year a large number of private bills are brought in. Last February there were 238 on a wide variety of subjects—almost every human institution was to be attacked and perhaps improved, and out of these perhaps four or five would have the faintest chance of being discussed. There is a ballot, and those who are successful in getting the first and even the second place have an off-chance of an innings; but it too often happens that a hard-pressed government will early in the session lay burglarious hands on these poor victims' nights, and the rest of the legislative proposals will perish in the general massacre of the innocents. And even if the expected night comes the mover may not come off. There may be a count or an adjournment, or some other of the accidents so well known to wan and weary waiters, may come in their turn to upset all calculations. One chance of blowing off steam is by putting down an amendment to the Address, but these things are not taken very seriously, and they are liable to the same risks and vicissitudes of fortune as other non-official proceedings. Then come the estimates, and they provide pegs for debating almost everything connected with public affairs, and at first sight nothing would appear more promising. Put down a motion to reduce a minister's salary, and get one or two friends

to back you up when the time comes. But here again disaster is in the air and the unexpected happens. The estimate in which you are interested is put out of its place to suit some one's convenience, or some one talks at such inordinate length on something that precedes it that it is jolted away and perhaps does not get back, or towards the close of the session, when the weather is hot, and members are fidgeting to be off, down comes the guillotine and millions of money are passed in the twinkling of an eye without a word of comment. This I consider to be a scandalous outrage on the taxpayer, and forms the strongest argument for Home Rule all round. If the pettifogging debates on microscopically important or local affairs could be discussed in their localities, when improved postal facilities at Skibbereen could stir up fervid oratory in Steven's Green, and the ethics of Molly Maguire's hen-yard no longer give rise to impassioned debate at St. Stephen's, then we may hope to get some kind of reasonable control over national finance, and an adequate consideration of foreign policy. And most especially of all may we hope to see the affairs of our great Indian Empire allowed more than a few hours of parliamentary time. The greatest enemy of the private member is his own class. The wearisome iteration and needless prolixity with which they debate wretched points of parochial detail, the utter want of proportion and selfish disregard for the rights of others, which distinguish too many of what I may call, with or without offence, the crank brigade, contribute largely to the utter discouragement and despondency which seizes the new member, and is never

quite absent from his mind, until he learns philosophy and cultivates a thick skin. Question time is a real god-send to the private member, for not only can he advertise himself at this time, but more abuses have been prevented, jobs checked, and acts of oppression and violence both at home and abroad scotched and killed by this than by any other means. Of course, it is liable to be overdone, and in former days before there was a time limit their number sometimes rose to 80 or 100, and 12 or 13 might be put down by one man. Now a certain period is allotted for verbal answering, and the interminable sequence of supplications "arising out of the answer of the Rt. Hon. gentleman" are checked as far as possible by the Speaker. The clerks seem to exercise a pretty wide discretion, for anything of a personally contentious or argumentative character is forbidden, and in any case of doubt reference to higher authority is always made. Some years ago ingenious questions so pestered a somewhat feeble Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and compelled him to make inconvenient or even compromising admissions or unsatisfying answers, that replies to queries on foreign affairs must be strictly limited to the officially printed questions on the notice paper. During the session of 1911 there were 11,742 questions on the notice paper and 3571 that were starred, this meaning that they are not answered orally.

I am quite sure that some members greedily search the morning papers to pick up some peg on which to hang a question, and whenever any great national disaster or important event takes place, there is a wild

rush and scrimmage to be the first to heckle ministers. Prominent among these, and often getting a good start, are the Hibernian patriots and the labourists, who aim at posing on all possible occasions as the real friends of their class and of the British nation at large. "Codlin's your friend, not Short," is their motto, and they wish to persuade a somewhat sceptical House, as well as the newspaper readers outside, that most of the useful legislation has been promoted, if not actually initiated by them; my own experience being that they "crab" and obstruct many things that they do not start themselves, or which interfere with the narrow tyranny of their official organisations.

One way of attracting attention which I do not advise is by rude interruption or grossly personal attacks on individuals. It is a curious thing that however badly the principal speakers' observations have fared at the hands of the reporters, the "voice" of the regulation malcontent or any other ill-conditioned person always appears verbatim. Lord Hugh Cecil's pointless and vulgar attempts to disturb the equanimity of Front Bench speakers by hysterical and inarticulate cries brought him more notoriety than his involved metaphysical attempts to make his meaning clear in more connected speech. Messrs. Conybeare and Ginnell in their much resented attacks on the Speaker, attained a brief and unsavoury notoriety, and Toby sums up the case in his own inimitable fashion—

"From time to time remarks interpolated in voice which stranger in gallery thinks must be that of the Bull of Bashan. It's only Will Thorn. Has been in

the House long enough to know that if he were at trouble to deliver ordered speech he would find in morning papers the line after a few words from Mr. Thorn. If he shouts interruption he will be reported verbatim, the more certainly in proportion to its offensiveness" (*Punch*, April 3, 1912).

If you wish to play a useful part, it undoubtedly is a good thing to be a bit of an expert, so that when your own subject comes up you have a good chance of being called. Certain members appropriate certain subjects, and it is almost equivalent to poaching for any one else to trend on their preserves. The word "China" was like rats to Joe Walton and Moore, and when it was mentioned they leaped up from each side of the House simultaneously to deliver themselves of their message. And in the same way India and almost every peg on which speeches can be hung at Committee time are pegged out like gold claims in prospecting districts. Local Government affairs always brought up Sir Massey Lopes and Sir Slater Booth, excellent officials of the past, who were unjustly sneered at as possessing the hallmark of mediocrity in double names, and in my own small way I was always given the preference when what I may venture to call any of my own subjects were under discussion.

Another way of attracting attention was commonly resorted to years ago, and that was to point the moral by means of an object lesson illustrated by actual specimens. I believe I was a pioneer in this movement, when I produced for the edification of a House a little bottle containing the white and silvery ashes of a cow

to show what a clean and even artistic process cremation really was. And special prominence was given to the incident by an evening paper, which recorded that the remains were those of a "count." Marjoribanks, as he was then, went one better by denouncing practically the faulty mechanism of the magazine rifle, which he pulled to pieces before us, and Caine (I think) pointed some moral from the chain industry by specimens picked out of a bag, but the drawbacks of the method are obvious, and it seems to have died out in later years. A good House of Commons manner is like a good bedside manner, partly inborn, partly acquired. But how? A certain amount of previous training at your school debating society or the University Unions, or some of those useful organisations which send forth missionaries to convert the politically benighted, is of undoubted service. But don't carry the process too far, or let the machinery be too evident. The glib platform orator soon finds his level when he addresses the green benches, and discovers that the plausible platitudes and confident perorations which bring down the house outside will not pass muster within. He realises speedily that he must cut down exuberance and speak clearly and to the point if he wants to score. Lessons in oratory are, I think, a mistake, for they tend to a pompous and inflated mode of delivery which fails to impress and may even raise a smile. But voice production is worth attending to, and actors say that a long and severe course of study and discipline is necessary to enable the voice to carry to any part of the House. But practice in big meetings goes a long way, and it

is a good plan to address some one at the extreme fringe of the crowd, and then to get some one else to sit there and say whether you are heard or not. Some time ago I was speaking in a large hall in the North, and one of the committee whispered in my ear that I had better raise my voice. But soon afterwards he came back and said it was all right, for he had been far back and heard perfectly. And I knew it would be so, for although my vocal organs are not specially robust, I can always make them tell by talking rather staccato and slowly, and, most important of all, raising the voice at the end of a sentence. I have always been able to make partially deaf people hear, and this faculty of clearness it was which made Chamberlain so effective in and out of the House, whilst Rosebery's habit of dropping his tones at the end of the sentence, though undoubtedly effective, is the only drawback to the otherwise complete splendour of his oratory. One of my friends, possessed naturally of a strong voice, had singing lessons in order to make it stronger, and the effect musically was rather overpowering to his friends, when he could persuade them to listen to his vocal efforts. Gladstone was a very successful singer in his younger days, and I heard the other day of a successful Front Bench man who now and then clears his larynx by declaiming sentences of sonorous prose in various languages in the calm seclusion of his own room. It is currently reported that Mabon, one of the most justly respected of the Welsh members, once chanted "Land of my Fathers" in his thrilling tones to an appreciative House; the eccentric Whalley was always urged to sing whenever he rose, and

an Irish member who claimed to address the House in his vernacular, because he knew none other, had his patriotic utterances unhappily cut short by the Speaker. Reading aloud, and more especially private theatricals are most useful in enabling you to face a crowd with confidence and throw out your voice so as to be heard, which, of course, goes a long way to make an effective speaker. Over-elaboration spoils many speeches, for if you can only chip in late when most of the obvious things have been said, you will find it difficult to adapt your carefully prepared machinery to the necessities of the moment. And this is the obvious objection to writing out your speech in full. An exception, however, may be made in the case of your maiden effort when the custom of the House gives you the preference and you can choose your own time for rising, and when you may safely write out, but not read. There is a written rule against this, but the attention of the Speaker is only directed to the breach by a common informer who rises to order and directs the President's attention to the offence. But in my long parliamentary experience I have only known this to happen twice, and in each case the sympathies of the House were unmistakably with the offenders, who pleaded that they were merely referring to full notes. The great advantage of a carefully prepared speech is the help it gives to the reporters, who, although they do their work admirably and often help lame dogs over stiles, are after all only human, and sometimes fail to catch what is said by a hurried or indistinct speaker down below, and it has always amused me to see a speaker after resuming his

seat slip up to the Press Gallery and hand his MSS. to the representative of the local paper. I only once wrote out a political speech in full, and that was when I had to face the very trying ordeal of a triangular contest, and it was of vital importance that I should get the start and place my view in ample detail well ahead of my competitors, so I worked hard all day and half the night; I had no secretary or typewriter to help me, and at 2 a.m., with a sigh of relief, I dropped two copies into the letter-box in time for the early post. And when I reached Huntly, my friend Joseph Dunbar met me, proudly bearing on high the printed slips of my speech, with cheers and laughter and various expressions of the appreciation of the audience dusted freely on and between the lines. I was more fortunate than the Rt. Hon. E. E. Baxter, whose speech had unluckily fallen into the reporters' hands, and been printed the day before it was delivered. And when he rose to make what was his annual account of stewardship, every one in the audience was in possession of the text, and corrected him abruptly if he varied from it. Another story I may tell concerns Craigie, the best of good fellows, but so mistrustful of his own powers that he got his agent to write his speech, and unhappily this contained the advice, "Stop here and drink a glass of water," which he solemnly read out, to the delight of his audience. On this particular occasion my speech was hardly a success, oratorically speaking, for I felt myself sadly hampered, talking in fetters, and unable to let myself go, or to deviate from what that excellent paper the *Huntly Express* would sow broadcast through-

out West Aberdeenshire next day. It is a most dangerous thing to trust entirely to memory unless you have acquired the happy faculty of thinking on your legs, which was practised by Asquith before he took up the reins of government, and which is possessed in perfection by Lord Advocate Ure. After an admirable hour and a half's speech, when he held a big audience spellbound from first to finish, I asked how he could retain such a complicated mass of figures in his head with no reminder. "Oh," he said, "I just see them before me." I remember sitting next my dear and ever-to-be-lamented friend Asher at a very important meeting when he was to speak. "What line are you going to take?" asked I. "I have not yet made up my mind," he replied, "but don't forget to give me a tug at the coat-tails when my ten minutes are up." And another dear friend, a most accomplished speaker, the late J. W. Crombie, told me that he could not get on with notes, so that he gave the most complete and convincing argument I know on Free Trade without anything to jog his memory. And Bonar Law, even when dealing with some complicated argument, delivers it with a most engaging and for the moment convincing air of frank and almost confidential spontaneity. I have elsewhere mentioned some almost tragical cases of sudden losses of memory bringing an apparently promising speech to an abrupt termination familiar to all politicians, and I recall even at this moment with a shudder two instances in which I had reared myself into an erect position at the orders of the toast master, an absolute evaporation of

memory took place, and I would have been hopelessly stranded without a few pencilled notes on the back of my menu.

Speaking of official ambitions, I would echo the old cry "too old at forty." I have known very few make what I call a real mark, though many do good work after that age. The few exceptions being Chamberlain, who came in equipped with a long contact with public affairs, and a masterful domination over a powerful municipality; Henry Fowler, whose fortune was made before he was half-way through his maiden speech; John Morley, whose earlier efforts gave but slender promise of the great position he was eventually to attain; and Lyon Playfair, whose lucid and up-to-date disquisitions on science were always eagerly followed by a crowded House. So if you have about attained middle life before you take your seat, drop ambition, be content to take a snug back bench place, listening attentively, cheering ministers, talking now and then on things that immediately concern you, and doing good, if unostentatiously, useful work, unrewarded as it is either in money or thanks; and I think you will find your reward in the approval of your conscience, and the wide outlook of interest that you acquire on the drama of life and progress, either human or crab-like, that is being enacted before you. All work and no play has, of course, a deadening and perhaps depressing effect, but if it is carried on under fairly good hygienic conditions, and is fairly successful, it does good rather than harm. It is better to wear out than rust out, and variety of occupation is the next best. But

if you want really to get on in the House you must be in continuous attendance, and watch for your opportunities, which may come in the most unexpected way, and may be very easily missed if you are not on the spot. Some people have a perfect mania for divisions, and Sir Richard Temple prided himself on never missing any except once, when he hurried back from dinner to find the door slammed in his face, and more fortunate legislators streaming out of the lobbies after recording their votes. Sir Godfrey Baring, of course, beat all other records with 612 consecutive divisions, and has remained a close attendant at the House ever since.

Another bit of advice I should like to give to the budding senator is to beware of pledges. When faced by the cranks and faddists who take advantage of the tender-foot, and induce him to plant his soles in the slippery bog where their will-o'-the-wisp lanterns have led him, he is very apt to try to be what an unfortunate mentally mixed speaker said Cæsar's wife ought to be, "All things to all men." But the momentary sense of safety secured by rash promises is dearly bought by what follows—when these dangerous birds come home to roost. In my first contest there was hardly a human institution or social custom which I did not promise to alter, or to improve, or to abolish, and if I was not confronted afterwards by these compromising statements it was due to my luck, and to the want of memory and want of capacity of my opponents—or perhaps they agreed with Healy, who, when they were taunting Chamberlain with some of the previous utterances of

his Radical days, said that he did not approve of conducting politics by means of a press-cutting agency. Careful consideration is like a Royal Commission, and sometimes equally successful as an anæsthetic, and under cover of that you may ride away unharmed. But hecklers have sometimes an awkward habit of demanding an immediate answer—Yes or No—and unless you are prepared to do this, the meeting will think you are shirking, and turn against you. But be as cautious as possible at first, and when experience and actual contact with public affairs have given you confidence, you will become practically unhecklerable, and able to wriggle out of any tight place, without leaving some of your tail feathers behind.

I wonder that no proposal has been made to put up a statue to the late Lord James of Hereford, the author of that blessed Corrupt Practices Act. But if he had been allowed his way it would have been far stiffer, as I well remember having listened to all the debates. In particular, the general schedule of expenditure would have been lower, and a definite scheme drawn up by which only so much could be spent on printing and a variety of other things.

Another useful maxim is, "never complain and never explain," and then again, "always verify your quotations." I have over and over again seen men get into serious trouble by not taking the trouble to fix into a perhaps loose and sloppy mind the exact words used by somebody, and it was a sight for gods and men to watch Gladstone sitting on his seat ready to spring and cover with confusion some unhappy opponent who had tried

to make political capital out of an incorrect version of his spoken words. It is also, I think, best not to impute motives. Very often they are subtle and subjective, and if they are objective, we may, to use a vulgar phrase, "get hold of the wrong end of the stick," and do an injustice to some worthy soul unwittingly.

Some rewards may come to the politician. If he is a failure in office, or if some pushing cuckoo has got into his nest, he may be shunted into the Upper House; and if this as an accession of dignity is much appreciated by the feminine element, the mere man, who probably would rather remain down below, puts the responsibility for acceptance on his wife. But in addition to social prestige and better chances in the matrimonial market, a seat in the other place keeps him in active touch with politics, gives him a share in a gallery in the Commons, and the run of the place generally. So that the payment of £500 in fees, and nearly as much more in clothes, is cheerfully borne.

Next comes, what I consider the most distinguished position of all, a seat on the Privy Council, and there are no fees here, only a tailor's bill of about £250 for a class of costume varying from a sort of sober simplicity to gold-laced splendour worthy of the *Heralds' office*.

I am often asked what the duties are, and I am obliged to say that I don't know. "My Lords" is a high-sounding title; but the work is generally done and the responsibility incurred by the secretary of the department, although I believe there are cases in which specially selected people are picked out from that august

body to consider some special question. A somewhat awe-inspiring ceremony is when you are sworn in, and a most elaborate code of instruction, which you must rigidly observe, is placed in your hand as you go in. Morning dress is enjoined, but you must wear a frock coat, and when Spence Watson presented himself in a cut-away garb, he was plainly told by the Lord Chamberlain that he could not appear before Royalty in such get-up. "But," explained the worthy doctor, "I have never had such a garment"; and then messengers were sent in all directions to borrow one, but nothing could be found to fit. In the end special permission had to be obtained for him to be sworn "just as I am." The curious point of the story is that he was the only man of whom the King took any notice, noticing him perhaps in the same way as he complimented John Burns on the fit of his official dress.

I believe that we can occupy the Board of that mysterious body called Queen Anne's Bounty, we can on due notice sit on any court of quarter sessions or justices' court, we can claim to be made Fellows of the Royal Society, we can obtain admission to the Chapel Royal, and we can stand or sit on the steps of the House to hear debates in the House of Lords. A recently appointed member was talking to the lady of the house, whom in his present exalted position he was told off to lead to the festive board, and in an unguarded moment he made this tactless remark: "The worst of being a Privy Councillor is that you generally have to take the hostess or some tiresome old frump down to dinner." I fear his chances of repeating the process in

that house would be rather small. And we take precedence of baronets and the younger sons of peers. But, best of all, I, with many others, was privileged practically to make the King on his accession, and a most notable and never-to-be-forgotten ceremony it was. We all assembled in an anteroom, and provided with Prayer Books, we knelt down and kissed them with uplifted hands. Then Lord Crewe formally announced the death of the King and introduced his successor, and I cannot conceive a more trying position for a young man at the first start of his Royal career. But nothing could exceed the quiet dignity and self-possession with which he delivered his little speech, and the impression that he made on us all was irresistible.

Or you may be made a baronet and pay £500 for the honour. Who was it said as advice to his son, "Never be made a baronet"? For you do not become a nobleman, and you have ceased to be a gentleman. Or a knighthood may come in your way, and if it is a K.C.B. with a star and a ribbon, I hardly know anything much more worth having.

Then there are what we popularly called billets to be picked up along life's highway. With a colourable pretension to legal learning, acquired by the consumption of some indifferent dinners, and the assumption of a degree, even if you have never seen a lunatic in the flesh, you may come to superintend his legal existence as a commissioner. If you have been called to the bar, and have done service to your party by fighting hopeless seats, or in other ways, you may become a sheriff or a county court judge, should your merits

not entitle you to a seat in the Supreme Court, and recent legislature has invented a fine crop of appointments under the Budget and the Insurance Act, which will be greedily scrambled for by hungry place hunters.

There will be great temptation to rush into companies, for there is still some magic in the letters M.P., and the barely fledged politicians will get many offers. Most of these will probably be doubtful or perhaps bogus affairs, for really good things need not only flashy names but business capacity and commercial credit, and they are not likely to go a-begging, so that you require to be very careful and should not let yourself be snapped up without taking advice from some experienced friend. Of course, if you are lucky enough to strike oil, don't hesitate to accept, and to risk your money, but whatever your confidence may be, don't advise your friends to follow your example. I have known at least one case where a politician not only lost his money, but his seat, because he had given "straight tips" to his constituents, and they were furious with him because he had let them in. And here in all earnestness let me warn you to beware of straight tips. I have never yet taken one without regretting, for they are something like stories told on the "very best authority," which so often turn out to be untrue. The late Lord Playfair told me that hardly a day passed without the offer of the chairmanship of a company at £1000 a year, but then his presence at the head of the board gave stability and confidence, and his scientific reputation, great natural ability, and power of lucid

exposition made him a tower of strength; and everything he was connected with did well.

If we run our eye through that useful and interesting book, the *Directory of Directors*, we will see that some of his colleagues took full advantage of their opportunity. The late Marquis of Tweeddale was responsible for the conduct from the chair of over thirty, and we find others who take twelve and fifteen under their more or less businesslike care.

My last pieces of advice based on the uncomfortable recollection of smarting fingers from too near contact with the fire, is never to underwrite, for the risks are great, and you may find yourself planted with a block of shares which you are unable to take up, and I wish that legislation would put a stop to a practice which lends itself to irregularity, shakes confidence at the outset, and robs shareholders of some of their legitimate profits. And then again never join in anything where the shares are not fully paid. I have in my memory painful cases where in some Scotch land companies the shares were £10 with one paid, disaster occurred, and the unhappy holder had to put up to the hilt.

My poor old friend George Anderson, a simple, honest, able soul, came a sad cropper over a diamond mine, and barked his shins badly. The prospectus set out in glowing terms the value of the property and the quantity of diamonds that had been found, and the managing director was sent out to inspect. When he arrived the crafty vendors had salted the ground with brilliants, which sparkled under his feet at every step, and he returned and reported most favourably. And

when the crash came, and the swindle was revealed, my friend went down too, but rose up again "unwounded from the dreadful close," and being set on his legs firmly by his friends, he entered the House as member for Glasgow, and did most important and useful work. And the evening of his days was brightened by the snug appointment of Master of the Mint at Melbourne, where he drew his £1000 a year, and effected many needed and highly appreciated reforms.

The case of Jabez Balfour ran on different lines. This was a man whom I neither liked nor trusted, and I used to call him "the animated Bath chap," from his resemblance to those dried pigs' faces which glare or grin at you from behind the plate glass of Italian warehouses, and I used always to remonstrate with the Whips for giving him the chance of good seats over the heads of better men. Like too many of his class, he concealed his sharp practices behind the cloak of religion, but I doubt if, at all events at first, he was actuated by a desire to break the eighth commandment. For it was only after his schemes began to go wrong that his error began, like the idle apprentice who puts his fingers in the till to pay his gambling debts, and I believe that some of his specs. on coming to maturity have done quite well. Not infrequently I remember mysterious papers being hawked round the House to raise a sum to prop up some decaying member, whose subsequent career perhaps did scant justice to the charity of his friends, and I used to be astonished at the sums sometimes contributed by personal friends and even acquaintances.

In former times, even in my own recollection, members of the Government were allowed to join boards, and inconvenience sometimes followed, either from ignorance, inadvertence, or sharp practice. The late Mr. Mundella, one of the straightest and most honourable of men, got into trouble through being made morally responsible for things that were done before he joined a board, and was most cruelly and unjustly accused of having used his position as President of the Board of Trade to stop the official receiver from making a full investigation into the company's affairs during liquidation. My memory does not enable me to say whether the presiding judge gave any support to this wicked and disproved calumny, but that he played Tory I am perfectly convinced, for whilst he censured Mr. Mundella for his evidence, he went out of his way to compliment the actual chairman, a man of his own political kidney, for the margin by which he escaped censure. Whether it was in consequence of this or not, I don't know, but Lord Rosebery, when he became Prime Minister, issued a stringent order that no minister of the Crown should hold any directorship, and C.-B. continued the self-denying ordinance, characteristically saying that he did not wish the Front Bench to become a sty for guinea-pigs. Two prominent Cabinet ministers told me that they had lost money by taking office, and Lord Balfour, an excellent man of business, with a level head firmly screwed on, excused himself for declining the chairmanship of Committees in the House of Lords, for which he was pre-eminently fitted, because he made far more money in some good

directorships than the beggarly pittance attached to that important office.

But on the whole the rule is a good one, and exceptions are only made in the case of family or philanthropic companies, and when C.-B. was asked whether tea companies in which two members of the Government were actively engaged, could be ranked in that category, he replied, "That depends on the quality of the tea."¹

One great worry of political life used to be the frequent and sometimes almost peremptory demands to do something for somebody. If you are supposed to be on friendly terms with a leading official of any public office, or to have any means of making your influence felt, whenever an appointment is to be given away, you will be besieged by hungry applicants, fit and unfit, who wish to enlist your help. If you succeed you get scant gratitude; if you fail, or decline to interfere, you have made an enemy for life. Was it not Sir Robert Peel who said after one of Disraeli's cruel onslaughts, "What does this fellow mean by continually attacking me like this? I never conferred a favour on him." Happily, the only bit of direct patronage formerly enjoyed by the M.P. is now withdrawn, and they are no longer responsible for Post Office nominations. And blessed be the day when this change was brought about, for the only trouble I ever had was in connection with pettifogging little parochial disputes in connection with berths of small pecuniary value.

A certain ex-Chancellor, distinguished no less for the

¹ Vide *In and Out of Parliament*.

prolongation of his useful life, than for the length of his head, has been called the Lord High Jobber, and I venture to confess that I largely sympathise with his proceedings. For not only is it desirable to provide for one's own family and to "keep one's ain fish guts for our ain sea maws," but when we administer preferment to one of our own relations, we do so because from intimate opportunities of observation, we know his capacity and special qualifications for the post, and so we do good to the public service. Therefore I should always be a jobber if I got the chance.

There were some mitigations of our hard lot in sitting on the green benches like "clucking hens" and listening to the weary drip of dreary talk in which stereotyped arguments were repeated over and over again with but the faintest attempt at variation. One of them, as I have elsewhere said, was the pleasant informal dinners, "just come as you are," which used to be made up, or the invitation to join some pleasant family circle for an hour or two with the official help of a pair. Considerable pressure is put on members by the Whips at feeding time to persuade their supporters to remain and make up their list of forty; but although, of course, you must support your party from time to time in this way, I strongly advise an adjournment for an hour or two to the club or elsewhere. It changes the air and sets you thinking of something else, and from experience I can say that nothing takes so much out of a man as remaining the whole day in the same unchanged atmosphere. No wonder ministers so often break down, although they have the sweet and safe

seclusion of their own rooms to retreat to, where they can smoke, drink tea, read, sleep, and possibly (?) do some of their official work. But I am sure that the unwritten law which obliges them to remain in the House every night until the (metaphorical) shutters are put up is a stupid one, and causes dyspepsia, bad temper, bad legislature, and slackness at their offices next day. Still this very summer Mr. McKenna, having gone home to bed, had to be brought back only to make in the first twenty seconds food for Opposition gibes during the rest of the session. Another point is that it is a great mistake to live too near the House. If you pitch your camp a mile or two away, you will get a good walk there and back, and will inhale a fresh atmosphere, mental and physical, which will recruit and refresh your faded energies.

I have elsewhere spoken of my old friend Armitstead's snug little dinners in Cleveland Square, between which and its namesake in Hyde Park, embarrassing mistakes were sometimes made, and where you would meet that inimitable conversationalist, Sir William Harcourt, or John Morley, or Edward Grey, or the G.O.M., and, possibly, Parnell, with Herbert Gladstone, most genial and delightful of personality, who used to live there, and helped his thoughtful and hospitable host to form an effective amalgam of all sorts and conditions of men, to sit down to an excellent dinner, and what Dr. Johnson would have called "good conversation." And since my old friend has been called to what some people might call a "higher sphere of usefulness," to which he gives constant and assiduous

attention, the flesh pots and wine cellar are still periodically at the command of his numerous and attached friends. Next must come the delightful refectious, first at Clanricarde Gardens, and later at Devonshire Place, where my best of friends, Causton, now translated into Southwark, and his accomplished wife receives with such unaffected and gracious hospitality. The larger entertainments are notable in their way, and more especially what we call the "sessional," when from twenty to twenty-six members, old and new, place their legs beneath his mahogany just before the opening of Parliament, and talk of all manner of things old and new. Recollections of the past, impressions of the present, prophetic glances at the future, all come under a brilliant blend of survey over the walnuts and the wine. But still better are the Sunday symposia, where eight or ten of his special intimates gather in an informal way, and in morning dress, to have a cosy chat, brightened up by her ladyship's finished singing, and Lady Roxburgh's skilful accompaniments, and the violin obbligato of the host. Chief among these faded but never-forgotten memories, is the cherished recollection of Canon Ainger, a man of singular charm and accomplishments, who either as singing with a sweet melodious voice, or reading with admirably dramatic expression, or talking with nimble wit and literary finish, could expand in congenial society, like G. W. Russell, into a perfect blossom or even bouquet of harmonious colour and perfume. Then came pleasant little week-ends with Charles Maclaren at Barn Elms, before it became Ranelagh, or Mr. L. Baker at Otter-

shaw Park, or Sir Trevor Lawrence, or the Penningtons at Broome, or Sir Jeremiah Colman at stately Gatton. And then when all was over the delightful schoolboy feeling of rushing away for the holiday, which you felt was well earned.

Some of my pleasantest recollections are of visits to picturesque Pembroke Lodge, where that delightful old lady, the late Countess Russell, aided by her accomplished daughter, used to dispense friendly hospitality. There might be met the flower of advanced Liberalism. Lord Spencer was a frequent visitor, and as the two ladies were ardent Home Rulers, Dillon and Justin McCarthy and other Nationalists often came to advocate their cause. And after some good and strenuous talk, would come an invitation to stay to dinner and fight the battles over again. The old peer had finished his long and useful career long before, and it is interesting to read how he gently faded away out of life with peacefully, but not painfully, impaired faculties, reminding me very much of the later days of two other fine veterans, Sir James Paget and Sir Henry Acland, whose lives are stimulating and inspiring records of work often carried on under serious drawbacks and discouragements from selfish vested interests and ill-mannered opposition.

Another interesting thing that came in my way was the Parliamentary trip to Ireland. The Hotel Committee, wishing to popularise tourist facilities, invited some of us to go there on very favourable terms. Our railway and boat fares were gratis and fifty per cent. taken off our living expenses; and we saw the best of

the country through the rosy hue of perpetual dinners, luncheons and teas. And when I say that among my companions were numbered Sir Charles Cameron, Henniker Heaton, the late Sir James Bailey, and Cumming Macdonna, and others, with a liberal infusion of most amusing press men, it will be admitted that all the materials for a good time were provided and heartily enjoyed, and we visited Killarney, Parknascilla, and all the places on which Nature has most abundantly lavished her treasures. We saw the fair maids of Cork, and last, but not least, the not always friendly Channel was in its best behaviour, and was no exception to the courtesy and good fellowship which met us everywhere.

But if the private member cannot always do much work, there are some compensations for what he has to submit to. Although he has no distinct official precedence, there is a kind of conventional importance attached to his position, although this has sadly dwindled since the House has been flooded with the Irish and the Labourists, of which, from all points of view, I wish to speak with the respect due to their ability and integrity. But an M.P. is still an object of interest, and perhaps of respect in a foreign hotel, and as I have always found both at home and abroad, if he wishes to make any special inquiry about anything, the gates of information are freely thrown open, for he can generally get the ear of the Press, and questions in the House and amendments on the estimates are looked upon with greater awe than they deserve. Then he has hospitality at his command, and thanks to Harcourt's skill and Col. Lockwood's practical

sagacity, he can give quite good dinners in a room crowded with interesting people, a privilege which the smart set, who, however much they may sneer at the dowdy commoners, cannot reach, and if the feeding does not quite come up to the Carlton or the Savoy, the wines are of the best, and the adjournment to the terrace, where coffee and undeniable cognac, and excellent cigars can be smoked in good air, with all the tranquil mystery of the river and its sluggish, but irresistible movement, and the twinkling lights up and down its banks, is quite the best thing to be done in London. And the same place in the afternoon, too, has a certain fascination, and there is the off-chance of a seat in the House to gratify the strange craving which some people have to hear a debate there. If only the women had left matters alone, how happy their own sex might have been.

The comfort of the House, the chances of the private member, and the working of the machine have been greatly impaired by the various sects and cliques which now split it up. We have the Unionists and the Tories, and the Free Traders, and the Tariff Reformers, and the Nationalists, and the O'Brienites, the Syndicalists (what on earth does that mean?), and the old-fashioned Labour and the Independent party, generally most independent of the labour which they claim to represent, and at one of the recent elections we had a prohibitionist and a suffragist candidate, both far down the poll. The difficulty being that each one of these parties with their Whips and their rooms and their party organisations claim to be called in succes-

sion, when they rise to speak and make vehement protest when they are not, thus adding greatly to the worries of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. And the frequently unmasked intrusion of a Labour man into a contest, while it seldom does anything for him, too often means the slipping in of the Tory candidate at a three-cornered fight. And here I wish to take the opportunity of registering an emphatic protest against the assumption of these gentlemen that they, and they only, are properly qualified to represent the working man. To begin with, many of them have never done a stitch of work, and could not do it if they tried, for they are generally paid secretaries, or treasurers, or officials of various organisations of a more or less socialistic nature, and why a vague and misty theorist should be the representative of his class, rather than, say, myself, who represented for twenty-five years a constituency largely composed of agricultural labourers, would puzzle a better man than me to explain. But happily we are spared from the impracticable dreams of the socialistic spouters by three causes. First, because the real working man won't have them; second, because their flimsy and unworkable schemes are remorselessly torn to tatters by the breezy common-sense of John Burns, and, finally, that in the end, they always begin to squabble among themselves. I suppose it was to conciliate this class, and facilitate their entrance to Parliament, which they can do perfectly well "on their own," that payment has been granted to members. This so-called boon costs a big sum, which the taxpayer can ill afford; no one asked for it, and

many will not take it, and it is unpopular in the country, which does not like to see its money wasted. And I have seen no one yet who can assert that the prestige of the Mother of Parliaments has been raised by paying a wage which has created a band of professional politicians in America, where no one who values his good name will have anything to do with parliamentary life.

Now payment of the necessary official expenses at election time is quite a different matter, and that I have advocated all through my public career. The effect of this pecuniary dole undoubtedly will be a triangular fight in every constituency, and the slip in of the Tory between these contending parties, and personally I would just as soon have an honest, straightforward member of that class than a nondescript carpet-bagging independent, who has been well described as one on whom no one can depend. I see there has lately been an amalgamation between the Tory and Unionist parties, but when—I say rather than if—for the thing is inevitable, Home Rule comes about, what is to become of the Unionist party? A few will, no doubt, come back to us, but many of the weak-kneed ones, who gladly tottered over the bridge so conveniently flung across the yawning gulf of Radicalism, will join the party to which they nominally belong, and will be relieved from the necessity for that most unsportsmanlike proceeding—fishing on both sides of the water. I remember a little friend of mine strutting triumphantly into the House after an enforced withdrawal of some years, proclaiming to his friends that he was as strong a Unionist and as good a Liberal as ever. All I know

about their Liberality is that, having carefully watched their proceedings since the split, every one of them, Chamberlain included, voted with absolutely solid unanimity, Tory on every possible occasion.

Perhaps by that time we may have women sitting on the green benches, and he will be a bold man who will predict how they will vote. Will the House then be more impracticable? I am thinking of the despair which inevitably seizes more especially business men in coming into active contact with such a hopelessly unbusiness assembly; when every obstacle, official and non-official, is put in the way of people who are sincerely desirous of doing something, and the greatest bores always seem to have the best chances given them for obstructing the business of the House. Defeated and dejected, the man who conscientiously wishes to do something flees from below upstairs and takes refuge in the committee rooms, chafes to get his opportunity there. On private bills and select committees he will find peace and quietness, and will find good solid work being done, and will be able to get unmolested his fair share of the work. But the grand committees which were to mould bills into a shape fit for the final consideration of the House, have now become mere debating societies to which, contrary to the wish of their framers, contentious measures are now sent, and where exuberant and obstructive verbosity consequently reign supreme, and waste the time of the country. And in the end if he does not succumb to an acute attack of the Chiltern Hundreds, he retreats to his kennel on a back bench, as a dumb dog with his tail

between his legs for the rest of his parliamentary existence. I can hardly think of any more mentally enervating place than the Imperial legislature. Most of your time is spent in languidly listening to other people repeating over and over again the same arguments in scarcely varied words, and in timidly looking for the chance, which seldom comes off, to intervene, and do the thing, as you fondly imagine, a little better; and when the time comes the real opportunity is over, everything has already been said, nobody takes much notice of you, and you sink back into your seat with a sense of dreary discouragement, and the determination not to tempt the oratorical fates any further. And then you must puzzle your brains over incomprehensible bills and tedious blue-books in the perhaps vain endeavour to comprehend some question in foreign or domestic policy which a really clear-headed man could place before you in comparatively few words. But, confused by contradictory statements and plausible arguments and subtle word-spinning, you get more and more mentally fogged, and at last you give up the attempt at full comprehension in despair, and simply follow your leaders with sheeplike docility at the advice of the Whips; and then, worst of all, you have to visit your constituency, expound your views, or conceal your absence of them, and begin the depressing round of bazaar and flower-show opening, and cattle-show dining, with dives into your trouser's pockets for a cheque-book to oil the wheels of your Parliamentary train. Luckily to-day you have now a fairly substantial salary, but whether this will not make matters worse by giving

your voters more claim to your services, as well as to your money, time alone will show.

But although there seem to be bad times coming for him in the future, the private member has done a lot of good useful work in the past, sometimes merely wielding spade and sowing the seed to be reaped as harvest by others, sometimes carrying out the whole series of agricultural operations for themselves. Trevelyan was the first to start a crusade against purchase in the army, and advocated it in and out of season until it was taken up and passed by Cardwell, who was Minister and got the entire credit. And the same bright and persuasive speaker, with the rich voice and air of supreme conviction, undoubtedly by his able and convincing speeches paved the way for the assimilation of the borough and county franchise. Few of us, who were privileged to hear him, will readily forget the sympathetic tones, the keen, eager face, and the real eloquence, spiced with "pawky" humour, which enabled the late J. W. Crombie to present his Children's Bill effectively to the House, and with the aid of tact and diplomacy and shrewd bargaining to guide it through the rocks and quicksands and Irish and faddish obstruction which lay in wait for it during its progress through the committee stages. I was not a member when Plimsoll made his famous attack on the Treasury bench and on the shipowners, which resulted in the carrying of his load-line bill; but I often used to see him in the Lobby, and his burly form and energetic look made me quite imagine the scene when he defied the authorities of the House and got suspended

to some good purpose. Curiously enough, young Trevelyan was also a pioneer in a useful measure, for it was his able and convincing speech and the good division which followed that brought about the taxation of land ground values, so powerfully advocated afterwards by Lord Advocate Ure. Sir Robert Peel both gets and deserves the glory of giving us Free Trade, but where would he have been without Cobden and Bright and Charles Villiers, all private members. My friend Southwark, then Causton, not only destroyed the van and wheel tax, which he thought harmful, but with all the persistent energy for which he was so remarkable, he made us his debtor by passing two most useful reforms—the redirecting of letters without extra charge, and the printing of their price on railway tickets. Sir Charles Cameron procured us sixpenny telegrams in addition to various other good things, and to Sir John Lubbock we owe his sainted half-holidays, as well as many useful reforms. I well remember my old friend Stewart, member for a Scottish constituency, frequently bringing before the House the necessity for a secretary for Scotland, but his voice was then as one crying in the wilderness, and the appointment was not made until its originator was under the sod. T. P. O'Connor passed with remarkable skill and tact an admirable measure for improving Irish labourers' cottages, and he also rendered essential service in getting the Midwives' Bill passed into law. And Parnell undoubtedly secured the abolition of flogging in the army; and good, kindly, learned and exuberant Swift MacNeill performed the same useful service for the sister

corps. So when people begin abusing the Irish members—and they can be most worrying at times—they have many good points. They are nearly all jolly good fellows, full of fun and sense, as straight as a die, and with perfectly clean hands, having never to my knowledge used their political position to enrich themselves—witness the self-denying ordinance which prevents them from accepting office, for it is well known that Gladstone pressed upon Mr. Parnell the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland, and others would have made most efficient additions to either Front Bench; and this I can say from long observation, that no worthy proposal for the improvement of social conditions or moral progress has ever been brought forward without the active support of the Nationalist party, except when they were compelled to obstruct generally in the interest of their own national policy.

McKenna first came into notice by exposing Austin Chamberlain's budget fallacies about stripped and unstripped tobacco, and if, or rather when Welsh disestablishment comes about, it will be largely due to Lloyd George's persistent advocacy in the C.-B. Parliament, which owed its downfall far more to him than to the snap cordite division, which never should have been allowed seriously to shake our equilibrium.

Henniker Heaton got us international postage to the colonies, and tried hard to get it for France as well. But officialism moves slowly, and the same arguments that were used against Rowland Hill find favour now, and will be equally disproved by experience and usage when the time comes. An excellent proposal to stop

pigeon-shooting, a stupid and ignoble sport, if it deserves such a name, and which we were informed on uncontradicted authority, is attended by shocking cruelty to the unhappy birds before they are put into the traps, passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords; and on that occasion the Bishops were either conspicuous by their absence or voted against the proposal, following out their action on another memorable occasion, when as Sidney Smith tells us, they defeated an attempt to stop the shocking brutalities perpetrated on chimney-sweeping boys.

Sir Edward Watkin tried hard, as Chairman of the South-Eastern Railway, to get us the boon of the Channel Tunnel. I venture to call it that, for as a bad sailor, the prospect of slipping over to Calais under the sea was much more agreeable than being rocked on the cradle of the deep above, and a careful study of the Blue Book convinced me that there would be considerable commercial advantage, more especially as obviating the necessity for breaking bulk in the shipping of fragile goods. In addition to that, conversations with French people led me to believe that some of the hostility and suspicion with which before the full development of the *entente cordiale* we were regarded by them was due to the arguments we used in opposing the plan. The military argument was, of course, ridden to death, and some of the old crusted warriors shook their grizzled heads, and predicted all kinds of terrible dangers. But every one knows that there are vulnerable places besides the heights at Dover from which, if we lost command of the sea, England could

be conveniently invaded, and the experience of Lady-smith shows that the pop-guns arming our forts are absolutely useless against the powerful ordnance carried by our modern ships of war. The idea of treachery is too degrading for serious thought, but if the enemy ever got possession of the tunnel, Lyon Playfair showed that for a few shillings he could fill it with a noxious gas which no lungs could encounter. I remember the very pleasant occasion when we went down to Dover, had an excellent lunch, saw the circular knives cutting through the grey, chalk-like cheese, and then in company with the G.O.M. returned to the House to vote for the bill. During the debate there was a fierce passage of arms between Watkin and Chamberlain, who accused him quite truly of having broken his undertaking not to go beyond the three-mile limit. And the chairman, with his back against the wall, rounded furiously on the President of the Board of Trade, who, he said, had been "blown into power by the bad breath of the Caucus."

Another argument in favour of the tunnel is that we might thus be enabled to check our enormously bloated naval expenditure and stop the game of brag with Germany, for in the most improbable event of war with that power, if we retained the friendship with France, we could always get enough foodstuffs to feed our people by this means from her stores to ourselves.

If private members can't always do work, they can at all events prevent others from doing it. The Irish party all have their allotted tasks, without any reference to their qualification, and I remember that one some-

what uncultivated member of the party, when he was told off for an educational amendment, was even unable to read the bits of paper that he held in his hand. Tanner's job was to watch the notice paper after midnight, and block all the bills by the simple process of raising his hat and shouting "I object!" Warton, on the Tory side, was prominent in the same direction, and his self-satisfied smirk, his snuff-laden nose, hoarse voice, and the ample red handkerchief which he defiantly wielded, as he either rejected by monosyllables, or adversely and ingeniously criticised the details of bills, was the signal for shouts of "divide," which succeeded in drowning his attempts to make himself heard. But both these worthies were inexorable, and no amount of coaxing and persuasion had any effect in relaxing their determination to prevent work being done. And their mantle has fallen on Sir Frederick Banbury, whose claim to recognition as senior City Member was based by himself on the faculty of speech on any subject at any notice and for any length of time. And when Mr. Balfour regained his place, though not his leadership, after a long absence, and heard his colleague on his legs, he happily said that when he left the House his colleague was speaking, and on his return he found him still addressing the House. But Sir Frederick is popular, both on the green benches and on the box-seat of his drag, where his well-groomed figure and cheerful, ruddy face seem to communicate some of his almost ostentatious prosperity to the handsome team which forms not the least conspicuous part of the procession of the Four-In-Hand Club. And perhaps he too has his uses, as stopping hasty and ill-

considered legislation, and bad bills, which he has evidently studied with careful and intelligent interest.

I should strongly recommend any one to whom I can give a friendly hint, unless he is young, strong, ambitious and absolutely pachydermatous, never to be in charge of a bill. That was my evil fate on several occasions, and I was invariably unsuccessful, and too well, too, I recall the weary waiting, night after night, before the twelve o'clock rule, and since its blessed operation, the hope deferred, the sickness of heart, as the fatal hand was seen to approach the hat-brim, the possibility of absence of its enemy, or the slumber not of the just nor of the unjust, and then that miserable sense of failure, as the defeated man crept home by cab or Underground. And if by any lucky chance, any negotiation or combination of causes, it got beyond that stage, your poor little bantling had to struggle through other tight places, only comparable to the passage of Sintram through the valley of the Shadow of Death, before it issued forth into the bright and almost dazzling beams of the happy land of success. It probably passes the wit of man to devise an effective remedy for the absurd impotence to which a great legislative assembly is reduced and the prospect of useful legislation sterilised by the simple process of removing the covering from the perhaps not too tightly-packed cranium of some obstructive opponent. But that blessed closure which, after being vehemently denounced by our opponents as destructive of all personal liberty and freedom of debate, is now used by them with almost wanton frequency, of course saves an enormous amount of parliamentary time and personal irritation, and its operation would

have been fatal to the scientific methods of the Fourth party, who were even more successful than the Irish in paralysing our work. Do we not all remember good old W. H. Smith's closure face, as his plump body sat on the extreme edge of his seat, with his eyes even covered, hands demurely shielded with black gloves, and ready to spring up at a moment's notice to make the fatal motion. For this admirable contrivance checks an ingenious plan for ruining the chance of an unpopular bill by affecting a keen and mysterious interest in its immediate predecessor, and talking at inordinate length upon it.

Sir Edward Clarke, who had been jockeyed out of Parliament by the malice of the Tariff Reformers, and who can ill be spared from an assembly which his shrewd nimbleness of mind and oratorical capacity adorned, had an excellent proposal, which has not yet been carried into effect, that bills necessarily dropped at the end of one session, should be taken up at the beginning of the next at the point where they were left. For is it not worse than disappointing to see some really useful measure left derelict on the bleak shores of failure, when a few hours more would have landed it safely on firm ground. Some people think we have too much legislation, and occasionally when I am in a pessimistic mood, I agree with them. But then at the massacre of the innocents the good sometimes perish with the bad. One of the worst instances of crankish obstruction in my recollection, was the dour and too successful resistance of an obstinate Welsh member to Sir William Harcourt's excellent Pistols Bill. If that had now been the law of the land the free revolver shooting, which

now goes on, would have been impossible, and which, as the author of the bill sarcastically said, its opponent in the interest of so-called freedom, directly encouraged.

Governments are vulnerable things, and it is not only defeat in the division lobbies or at the polling booths that brings them to grief. Personal likes and dislikes, the reality or the suspicion of political slights, or even the intrigues of smart or discontented people of either sex outside may bring about the dry-rot, or the little speck in garnered fruit which may cause the body politic to decay. Three men are believed to have seriously and even fatally damaged one of Gladstone's governments. First and foremost, Bob Lowe, for his overbearing treatment of deputations; second, Lord Advocate Young, for his cavalier treatment of Scotch members; third, and perhaps worst, Ayrton, for his Philistine attitude to art, science and literature, as well as the ill-bred insolence with which he bullied eminent professors of these fine arts. But Nemesis came on them all. Young's practice had so much suffered from his enforced attendance in Parliament that, when the general election arrived, precipitated by an education bill and announced with such startling suddenness that one of his own ministers only just heard of it through the "ordinary sources of information," he had abruptly to ascend the bench on a patent which had been made out for little "Johnnie Maclaren." Bob Lowe, after his tragical breakdown in the House of Commons, when he lost his way in his notes, and could not retrace his steps, had to go to the lethal chamber and undergo political extinction; whilst Ayrton's enemies were strong enough to turn him out of his seat, and after

repeated attempts and ignominious ratting he failed to get back. It was an unlucky moment for Young's successor, as Lord Advocate, when the reversion of the judgeship was snatched from between his teeth. He would have been saved much humiliation and worry, and would have been £5000 richer if he had become Lord Maclaren instead of the holder of an office for which he was unsuited in many respects. He was very able and acute, and a thoroughly good little fellow in every way, but he was very small and, like St. Paul, he had what we Scotch folk call a "weak word," high-pitched and piping, and punctuated in short intervals by an irritating little cough, and when he rose up to talk from the Front Bench it took you some time to discover that he really was on his legs; and not being up to the obstructive methods and the compromising tendencies of the Imperial Parliament, he tried to rush too many things through at the same time, and so got badly blocked. And I am bound to say, though I do so with regret, that he was not over well treated by his own side. Harcourt took a dislike to him, and it was rather absurd to see the big man stalking along contemptuous and unconcerned, and the little one trotting meekly by his side. And when a vacancy came on the bench, as he told me the story himself, "I was sent for to see Gladstone and Harcourt, and they immediately began to bully me. They offered me the place, and when I told them that I did not wish to leave the House of Commons, the great Elchi in his most commanding tones told me that he must insist on my acceptance, and so my political career was over. But I then and there registered a vow that when I had served my fifteen

years I would take my pension, and come back to the House and go for Harcourt." But he never did. He became one of the ablest and most respected judges, and died much missed and lamented after a distinguished and honourable career. His old father, a tried and trusted citizen and former Provost of Edinburgh, but who took himself so seriously that his wife was reported to have said, "That it would be a weary world if there were all Duncan Maclarens," was also highly respected in Parliament, where he did useful work, and it was a bitter blow to him when family loyalty induced him to give up his seat to his son, who had been unseated on petition, and who could not hold office outside Parliament.

Then sometimes gangs of cranks and faddists combine to worry Governments and even to destroy them, in spite of sops of concessions flung to them from the Parliamentary car as it dashes past. Having watched the proceedings of these gentry for many years, and fought them at every point, few know better than I how small their powers are in proportion to the vehemence of their howls, and how insignificant is the amount of wool that is shorn in proportion to their cries. The great mistake they so often make, and which has caused them to miss valuable opportunities, is the intolerance and intemperance of their attitudes, and their folly in losing a good bite off the loaf because they cannot get it all. Over and over again, and conspicuously in the case of Bruce's Drink Bill, they have lost everything because they would not compromise and take something, which might have been made the stepping-stone to further concessions. And in the end they have to

accept something much less than they would have got in the first instance.

It must be a great trial to any one to be compelled to leave the House by the forcible eviction entailed by defeat. Not only is there the sense of failure on the part of the beaten man, who leaves the ring vanquished, though not disgraced, but it means the entire rearrangement of the scheme of life, the more or less severance of the friendships arising out of daily and intimate association in the life's work, and which of necessity slacken with the severance of the links of common interest. And when a man is past middle age, and has given up other things for a political career, it is all the more difficult to go back upon them, or to start afresh on new lines. I was always victorious at my six contests, and retired voluntarily, as I felt the work beginning to impair my health; and to tell the plain truth, I was getting a good bit bored with the dullness and monotony of seeing and hearing other people doing things, and being practically shut from taking any personal part in the proceedings. And then the expense was a serious item; although no one was ever treated with greater consideration by his constituents regarding subscriptions, even at the most modest computation £800 must be reckoned on for the contest, and having an entailed property and being thus deprived of borrowing power, my only way of raising the necessary funds was by letting my place. I never had any difficulty in doing that; but it makes you a homeless wanderer for the time being, and an absentee landlord cannot be regarded as fulfilling his duty to his tenants. And although technically I may now be con-

sidered an idle man, who paddles his own canoe in a quiet breakwater, and placidly watches the waves and the "Sturm und Drang" of active progress sweep past him on every side, I don't think I am likely to die like a historical character of having nothing to do. At the last general election I addressed sixteen meetings in various parts of four constituencies; last year I opened three bazaars, gave four lectures, and took an active part in four or five party gatherings. In addition to which the management of an estate containing about a hundred and fifty farms of all sizes requires some care and attention, which I give in conjunction with my active and practical agent, Mr. Francis Cochran.

What a curious state of matters it is that when you wish to shake yourself clear of the House of Commons you cannot do so by the simple process of resignation. You have to go through the polite fiction of accepting an office of profit under the Crown, and claiming the steward or bailiffship of the Chiltern Hundreds, officials who, in the old days, used to be paid to protect the inhabitants of those regions from the depredations of wolves. And, therefore, if a member became insane or incurably ill, he could not get away, and his constituency, as in the case of Glasgow about thirty years ago, was therefore disfranchised until death cut the knot of difficulty. My poor friend Middleton had two exceptionally strenuous colleagues, and the observation of their work, and the responsibility of his own position so preyed on his mind that he went out of it, and never got back. I believe legislation has now remedied this grievance.

CHAPTER V

FROM THE GREEN BENCHES

THE study of personal characteristics always has a certain fascination. I have already considered who was the best speaker in the House. As the worst Sir Charles Wood, though before my time, was an easy first, for he was described by Grant Duff as "having not even the faculty of articulate speech"; and were it not invidious to criticise the living I could mention one or two still in public life who would run him hard. Mr. Eaton, afterwards Lord Cheylesmore, had the reputation of being the best-dressed man in the House, but this was before the days of cummerbunds and white ducks and tight frock-coats, and cut-aways with the restraining button gently reposing on the epigastrium. As for the worst—and the tailor and cutter might refresh our memories—is not their name legion? I fancy that the late Tom Collins might get first past the post, or, at all events, make a dead-heat, and he certainly had the reputation of being the meanest man in the House. There is a lurid story about a dinner he gave to a friend, and it is also alleged that when there was some delay about his taking his seat after election, it was explained that he was waiting for an excursion train.

The handsomest men by common consent were

Arnold Morley, the present Lord Pembroke, and George Wyndham; and as for the ugliest, my old friend Sir Richard Temple undoubtedly reached the point when extremes met, and his ungainly, though picturesque appearance almost became beautiful; but that he retained faith in himself was shown by the well-worn chestnut about himself and his wife which I am ashamed to reproduce. This subject gave rise to one of C.-B.'s best *bons mots*. There was some discussion about personal appearance; disparaging remarks were made about some one on the Tory side, and a damaging comparison was made between him and Mr. Kavanagh on ours. "Ah, but," said our leader, "he's perfectly sound, what there is of him." This able Irishman being a torso of singularly commanding and intellectual aspect.

The oldest member of the Upper House is Lord Wemyss, whose vitality was unimpaired until his unfortunate accident, and in the Lower Mr. Young, the Belfast distiller, reigns supreme, carrying his ninety-two years as lightly as a flower, drinking, eating and smoking like ordinary mortals, and attending closely to his political duties.

Let me now add some impressions of the speeches that have most impressed me. First and foremost I must place Gladstone's contribution to the debate on Bradlaugh. For, talking in utter detestation of the opinions of the man, he rose to flights of impassioned oratory which deeply affected his hearers in defence of what he considered to be right and just—and it is reported that Queen Victoria took exactly the same line.

Stansfield's speech in rejection of the Contagious Diseases Acts was a most powerful effort, and ensured the victory which followed, and although I voted against him I was one of the first to offer my congratulations when all was over. Bradlaugh's own speech standing at bay at the Bar was full of passionate fervour, and when he was grudgingly and tardily allowed to take the seat which he had honestly won in an honourable contest, instead of being the wild iconoclast of his prejudiced opponents, he cooed as gently as any sucking dove, and became such a sturdy opponent of Socialism and even of unreasonably forceful Radicalism that it was currently suspected that, given a few years of tactful social recognition, he might have been lured over to the other side.

Sir Charles Russell might have been compared to "single speech Hamilton," for he made only one really successful appearance in the House on some Irish Bill; but in those days the Attorney-General was allowed to take private practice, and his overwhelming labours exhausted his energies and claimed his best talent. And Lord Rathmore, then Plunket, also never equalled one great speech which must rank among the efforts of contemporary oratory. Sir Henry James seemed almost inspired when arguing against female suffrage, and the same theme encouraged Sir C. Maclaren to speak very effectively and convincingly, and to secure a good division, to the great advantage of the cause which its injudicious supporters have so fatally damaged by a series of cowardly and purposeless outrages. Dull and sluggish though the then Lord Hartington seemed to

be, when he was thoroughly roused to face the foe, with his back to the wall, he could speak with admirable force. Those were the days of more orderly debate, when the leaders of the opposing parties gave their formal replies previous to the division, and I always used to admire the way in which our leader, as he then was, but not always *ohne Worte*, would sum up the main features of the matter under controversy with shattering effect to the arguments of the opposition, and having, I really believe, an influence over the coming votes. We read in his very interesting memoirs that this easy-going and apparently detached indifference was real, that the whole business of politics bored him, and that he only went into them from a sense of duty, thus reminding us of Lord Althorp, whose real interests were those of a county gentleman, and Sir E. Grey, who was almost forced into active life by Mr. Gladstone, and who is still much happier plying his dry fly on the river-bank than sitting on the green benches through weary hours of debate. But he again had the admirable faculty of calm, well-balanced, judicious speech, which on some occasions, when things were looking ugly abroad, steadied the public mind with no less patriotic, but more judicious utterances than the "*civis Romanus sum*" of Palmerston. The House always used to fill when Playfair was up. Like a wise man, in his position as University Member he only spoke on his own subjects, and I have heard him with delight expatiating on margarine and horseflesh and vaccination, experiments on animals, and other kindred topics which were so congenial to his richly-stored mind and unique powers

of clear exposition. He was much aggrieved at being excluded from one of Gladstone's Governments, and went to ask the reason. "You are too old for office," was the reply. "But, sir, I am much younger than you." "That may be, but I am an exception to all rules." Dilke, on the other hand, though I would not go so far as to christen him, like a more eminent politician, "The Dinner-bell," did get wearisome after a time, and people began to slip away, for his mass of encyclopædic knowledge was something like pemmican in its compressed and concentrated quality. But if you had the patience to wait and listen, you were rewarded by getting complete and up-to-date information on the question under discussion. He led a strenuous, most industrious life, and a sad ending, crushed down under the weight of accusations in which I never believed, and which might have been refuted if he had gone, contrary to the advice of his counsel, into the witness-box. Labby said he ought to have insisted on giving evidence even if his advisers had torn off his coat-tails trying to hold him back. It was painful to hear his loud, joyless laugh, to see his unsuccessful attempts to form a party, and his incessant efforts to impress the House with his knowledge and independence. It was this last quality that proved his ruin, for I suspect that C.-B. would have given him office if he had not voted against the Government on the fateful cordite division.

A speaker who once made a great sensation in the Derby debate was Lord Elcho, whose speech in support of the adjournment was full of wit and good argument from his own point of view. But he never followed it

up, and many regrets followed his disappearance into private life.

Chamberlain's oration on the introduction of his Merchant Shipping Bill was a great effort. After about three hours of patient attention the minister of the interior gently reminded me that Nature abhorred a vacuum, and I went out to dine. On my return I found the President of the Board of Trade still hard at it, and I was in at the death. But although I believe that the accusations he made against the shipowners were true in the main, they were made at an injudicious time and in an unconciliatory way, and in the end the forces of opposition became so strong that no further progress was made. This was about "Joe's" only chance of carrying out constructive legislation, for the Gothenburg system of public-house management, so strongly advocated by him at one time, he quickly dropped when he found that the cat jumped the other way, and as for Protection, with which he has unhappily connected himself, I agree with Ure that "Tariff Reform is a swindle of the very first order, the most gigantic fraud ever attempted to perpetrate on an intelligent people."

One of the most impressive speeches I heard in the House was by Sir George Trevelyan when introducing the Crofters' Bill, which as an Act has been such a success by giving these sometimes downtrodden peasants an added sense of responsibility and the motive to work through the assurance that they should take out of the ground whatever they put in. The Secretary for Scotland had a remarkably attractive style, a rich,

clear voice, admirable elocution, and that air of complete conviction which is necessary to put the coping-stone on any oratorical effort. And his matter, as might be expected from such a master of style, was well arranged within reasonable compass. And here let me advise my readers to get the Report of the Crofters' Commission, written by Lord Napier and Ettrick. Blue-books are too often dreary, rambling and confused. This is well arranged and expressed in such picturesque language as to be entitled to the name of literature, and it made out such an unanswerable case, and furnished such an admirable brief for its exponent that the debate ran on friendly lines, and no serious opposition was offered to the undoubtedly drastic changes effected in agricultural law and custom.

Colonel Saunderson was always listened to with delight, for he was brilliant and slashing in his denunciation of the Nationalists, who, although they outwardly resented the attacks, were always most friendly to him in private life; and T. W. Russell, in those days a determined opponent of the Land League, used to carry us all away by his vehement protests against their proceedings.

Budget speeches ought to be, and generally are, epoch-making, for they are absolute mysteries until the supreme moment comes, and it is amazing that, considering the incessant and ingenious activities of a competing Press, and the various hands through which the details must pass, that the secret has only oozed out on one solitary occasion. And when the long-looked-for night arrives, and the tax-payer anxiously waits for

light and leading as to remission or exaction, it is delightful to watch how the master of the situation plays with his audience, gently leading them along through historical paths and financial platitudes until the supreme moment arrives. And then there is the general rush to the post office, and electric messages—sometimes shocks—sent flying all over to announce the decision of the Chancellor. Gladstone scored some of his greatest oratorical triumphs on these occasions, and the dry details of complicated finance and figures became even more interesting than the last romance from the book-box. Then came Goschen, who also had the charm of his active and ardent mind, and who cracked the time-honoured jokes about rum with even more than the usual effect, for he had a pretty wit and could use it effectively. Childers, that burly, good-humoured, but dullish Parliamentarian, of a type that was a component and apparently essential part of every Cabinet, wagged his big head and ample beard with mandarin-like regularity, but failed to make much impression, save on the memorable occasion when his obstinate adherence to a liquor tax brought down the Government about his ears.

Ritchie, a worthy and capable man, made useful but undistinguished explanations of his policy, and “Randolph’s” tragical resignation prevented us from hearing his far-seeing and reaching budget which he had tactfully passed through the Cabinet. But it has been rescued from oblivion by his son, whose brilliant book contains a pretty copious *résumé* of financial proposals coined from the fertile brain of the resourceful and rapidly

developing statesman in command of the Treasury supplies. Neither space nor patience would hold out against an absolute reproduction of these proposals, for they are both numerous and complicated; but we find anticipation of Lloyd George's schemes for shoving the burden of taxation on to the shoulders of those best able to bear it, and the reduction of the income tax to fivepence, a real boon to many a hard-pressed member of the upper and upper middle classes.

I doubt whether many of the present generation of politicians have heard of Mr. S. Whitbread, who was a conspicuous figure in the early eighties. It is an open secret that he might have attained almost any office from the Speaker downwards, if he could have been persuaded to give up his independence as a private member. But in that capacity he was singularly effective. He had a grand presence, a big imposing voice, and he spoke with a measured judicial dignity which was the outward and visible sign of a high character and great intellectual capacity.

Rumours of the approaching Life of Labby begin to revive interest in that most interesting personality. A compact and effective blend of diplomatist, journalist, man of the world and politician, he was not long in attracting the attention of the House, and in the end he occupied a unique position. As a skilful critic of finance, and more especially of foreign policy, he has seldom been excelled; but his solid and useful qualities were often obscured by his airy and debonair style, and his winged shafts of sarcastic humour. Yet he often did really good service, and we should all be grateful for

the way in which, through the medium of *Truth*, he unmasked frauds and impostures, and exposed the follies and cruelties sometimes perpetrated by the great unpaid.

Although Labby drank nothing but water, he was intemperate in his use of tobacco, for a cigarette was seldom out of his mouth, and as the air of Parliament is not permeated by the "Stygian fumes of the pit that is bottomless," he had to be perpetually flitting out for his necessary whiff. But he was the essence of hospitality, and whether in his beautiful house at Westminster, where Patti sometimes sang to his guests, or at historical Strawberry Hill, we were always delighted to find ourselves under his roof.

I remember some charming open-air plays to which the arrangement of the picturesque grounds lent itself admirably, but on one occasion the rain came down in torrents and completely soaked the unhappy fairies who came tripping to us along the verdant glades in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, reminding us of Anstey's inimitable skit in *Voces Populi*.

Sir Henry Howorth had—and, I am glad to say, still has—a quaint old-world personality which, added to his well-stored mind, makes him very attractive. He has an instructive way of decanting his unspoken speeches into the columns of the *Times*, and he has written some learned books, concerning one of which he tells a good story. It was about "Mongols," and a gushing young lady, on being introduced to him, enthusiastically exclaimed, "Oh, Sir Henry, I am so glad to meet you! You know I am devoted to dogs, and I hear you have written a book about '*Mongrels*.'"

My friend, the late Sir Isaac Holden, one of the most ingenious industrial inventors, had one great disappointment, that he did not live longer, for I believe he had set his heart on becoming a centenarian, and he had made all his arrangements accordingly. His idea, and a very sound one, was that many of the pathological mishaps of elderly folk are due to brittle arteries; and to prevent this he never drank anything but *Salutaris*, which is distilled water, and can deposit no calcareous salts, and with this his tea and coffee were made. Then he took very little meat, but an abundance of vegetables and fruit, and the faintest dash of stimulant at night; he was well clothed in Jaeger, and oiled his body all over regularly. But in spite of these precautions that wretched pest, influenza, caught him up before he reached the hoped-for goal.

Professor Stewart, in his admirable narrative of his own interesting and varied career, gives a pathetic account of the persistent attempts made by Thorold Rogers to capture the ear of the House, even a more difficult feat than to catch the eye of the Speaker. But he entirely failed, although he possessed many of the qualities that make for success. He had a good voice, complete fluency, caustic humour; and in private life was an admirable raconteur. But from the public point of view, partly, I think, because he was too dogmatic, overbearing and self-confident, he was undoubtedly a failure, and having been very confident of taking the House by storm, he was, I believe, bitterly disappointed when cries of "Divide, divide," invariably followed his rising.

On thinking, sometimes sadly, over the past, and linking it up with the present, the unforgotten shades of former friends, who are not lost but gone before, flit across the stage of memory. I have now come to the time of life when I almost hesitate to run my eye over the obituary of the *Times*, and the list of my real intimates becomes small by degrees and beautifully less.

I greatly miss Sir John Barran, whose cheery smile and friendly greeting, and invariably, though not too ostentatiously, proclaimed appreciation of the *joie de vivre*, undoubtedly brightened the mental horizon of his familiars. Not content with the administration of excellent dinners, he went one better and invited me to several Leeds festivals, where from the admirably planned hospitality of Chapel Allerton Hall, and the pleasant society of his nice Scotch wife and daughters, we drove daily and nightly to enjoy the greatest musical treat that could be devised, for I listened to Clara Butt and Albani, and Edward Lloyd and Joachim, and assisted at the *première* of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, and the *Elijah*, a standing dish there, in addition to other original works by Mackenzie and Walford Davies, whose famous *Every Man* I heard there for the first time.

And then comes the good old, comfortably-framed, friendly Winterstoke, who seemed to live largely for the purpose of making the lives of others happier by his unfailing *bonhomie* and excellent hospitality. His annual yachting trips were much appreciated by those who can brave the minor perils of the deep, and I could have joined them had not constitutional infirmity stood

in the way. But, for the same reason, I was obliged most regretfully to decline Sir Donald Currie's invitation to join that memorable sea-borne trip when Tennyson read his poems to Gladstone and an enraptured circle, and when Royalty came to shed the light of its serene presence o'er the scene.

Bryce is still happily pursuing his full life of incessant and unmeasured activity, and I missed him much from the House when he left it. He was one of the few Cabinet Ministers who could descend from their Olympian heights to associate with lesser mortals, and to me he was always inspiring, sympathetic and helpful, a thoroughly good fellow all round, whilst his brilliant success in America is a pride and satisfaction to his many friends.

One of the comrades whose removal I have regretted most was Buchanan, whose acquaintance I first made in Berlin. I was there disestablishing medical rust and trying to acquire up-to-date polish, and he was gratifying the cravings of a singularly refined and cultivated intellect by rubbing shoulders with German philosophy. We came together over *Weissbier*, a fluid of which we had heard a great deal and which we wished to sample, and we made an excursion into some suburb where it could be drunk to perfection. But after a draught or two of the thin, sour fluid we came to the conclusion that in spite of Bismarck's enthusiasm, nothing would persuade us, not possessing his "grand accommodation" and indiscriminating relish of all foods and drinks, to try it again. It was a good many years afterwards that we foregathered once more, but this

time he came as political guest, for I was by then Member for West Aberdeenshire, and he was looking out for a seat. He first thought of Banffshire, but Asher had sailed in there supreme, and he then had a shot at West Edinburgh and hit the mark. And both then and afterwards in East Aberdeenshire he got himself adopted by running ahead of local organisation and their squabbles, announcing his candidature by bill, taking a hall and addressing the people. And finally, after a chequered career, he settled down to a safe seat in West Perthshire, which held him in ease and comfort, and with the respect and regard of his constituents, until ill-health compelled him to retire and give up the post of Under-Secretary for India, in which he was so conspicuously successful. His too early death after a long and weary struggle, with flickerings of hope and the darkness of dreary depression, patiently and nobly borne, came soon after; but his pleasant memory survives. I can never forget his true and tried friendship, his hospitalities at All Souls' and South Street, his object lesson of how a good man can live and die. Buchanan was a special favourite of Campbell-Bannerman and a frequent guest at Belmont, where the kindred spirits enjoyed walks and talks together, and the Prime Minister never failed to chaff his faithful vassal about Kitty Brewster and Maud, two prominent places in East Aberdeenshire, but which he assumed to be special lady friends of the attached Member.

High upon friendship's roll must stand the honoured and respected name of Asher, a staunch ally of mine alike on the green benches, the oratorical platform and

the grouse moor which he trod so happily : a man of exceptional intellect, the most powerful counsel of his time, and of a singularly winning and attractive nature. His career was essentially an unfortunate one, for another excellent man, J. B. Balfour, was just a little ahead of him, and being on the wrong side when vacancies occurred, he missed the big professional prizes and the opportunity of higher distinction.

Sir John Kinloch would have been most useful in the House now, when so many crude and vague schemes of so-called Land Reform are in the air. For he represented a class which is rapidly fading out of active political life, the county gentleman who lives on his estate, and manages it entirely himself without the help of a factor. There was nothing in the whole range of county life and work that he did not know thoroughly ; and on the too few occasions when he addressed the House he always impressed us by his blunt downright method of speech, his first-hand knowledge and his manly pluck.

Sir William Agnew was another good and true friend, and with him I enjoyed many refreshing talks about art, as well as excellent dinners in his beautiful house in Great Stanhope Street, where gems from every representative studio and palette delighted the eye at every turn.

Wallace, take him all over, was one of the most interesting men that ever sat in the House of Commons. For what a wonderful career he had ! The son of a small gardener, the liberality of friends sent him to school and college, and he became in succession Pro-

fessor of Biblical Criticism and Church History, the popular preacher at Old Greyfriars, editor of *The Scotsman*, Member of Parliament, and finally barrister. And in the latter connection an amusing story is told of his son, who had been called to the Bar before him, and who always referred to his father as "my learned Junior." It was inevitable that, with his broad religious views, he should have added a heresy hunt to his other experiences; but the run was a short one, and he easily distanced his pursuers and left them panting in the rear. Although no trace of parsondom hung about his dress, the deep and measured inflections of his thoroughly Scotch voice smacked somewhat of the pulpit, whilst his strongly-marked features and blended expressions of seriousness and fun suggested a good dash of the man of the world trained in its affairs. It was some time before he captured the ear of the House; but when he once obtained it he held it by his caustic humour and the robust common sense expressed in a breezy Doric quite peculiar to himself.

I have very pleasant recollections of my old friend "Peter" Esslemont, an upstanding and outstanding man who took a good position in the House, and would have gone higher if he had begun the pursuit earlier, and had not been hampered by business engagements. He was always true and loyal and helpful as a colleague; and a chip of the old block remains to hand down the traditions of his able and upright father, for his son George is firmly established in the regard and respect of his constituents in Aberdeen.

And Dr. Webster, although he took too late to active

politics, was a distinct success, and I was grateful to him for much pleasant intercourse at St. Stephen's and at Edghill, where I admired his fine books and Rembrandt etchings, sipped his superlative Chambertin and let sleeping dogs lie, for Fritz and Toby were not always to be "lippen till " if anything, and most especially competition for cocoanut biscuits, happened to ruffle the sweet serenity of their tempers.

I gradually lost most of my scientific friends, greatly to my regret. I worked in many things with Sir Charles Cameron, and admired his knowledge and his tenacity and energy, no less than the skill he displayed in piloting his numerous Bills successfully through the House.

Poor Priestley was carried off in the full flush of a career that suited him exactly, and amid universal respect and regret. When I used to sit with him in the earlier stages of his trying illness he loved to hear what was going on in the House, and to send affectionate messages to his old comrades. His intellectual face, handsome figure and alert walk were much missed at St. Stephen's when he laid himself down in Hertford Street never to rise again.

And Michael Foster, too, was taken away from us far too early, for he and Sir Henry Roscoe—still, happily, in vigorous health—were the really up-to-date scientists in the House, and he more especially was much looked up to when microbes were in the air, or if it were necessary to expound the mysteries of some abstruse point in sanitation or physiology; and we all listened with delight to his rugged talk, and the hearty staccato laugh

which received or gave out the humour which was the essence of the man.

I had a slight acquaintance with the late Professor Stokes, who, although supreme, I believe, in his own line, was utterly useless as a member of Parliament. His ambition was to follow the example of Sir Isaac Newton, who was President of the Royal Society and representative of Cambridge University; but he never opened his lips in the House nor did anything to advance the claims of science there. On one occasion there was a vivisection debate, and I ventured to suggest that as I knew he had signed the certificates of several physiological operators, it was his duty to come back after dinner and defend. But he only smiled feebly, and went away and did not return.

A very different type of man was Walter Foster, now Lord Ilkeston. He made great sacrifices to gratify his political ambition, for he gave up the leading physician's practice in the Birmingham district, and embarked on the successful career which eventually landed him on the Front Bench. Both in and out of office, and when freed from the trouble of official life, he did excellent service alike as speaker and administrator, for he was facile, plausible and satisfying as a debater, and when at the Local Government Board he initiated and carried out useful reforms. I have always regretted that his energy and ability were not utilised by successive Governments, but he was raised to the House of Lords, and was just making a mark there when his health gave way, and he was forced into a retirement which we hope and believe may be only temporary.

Much controversy circled round the late W. E. Forster. The education cranks denounced him as untrustworthy, and the Irish were, of course, compelled to make him out to be a monster of iniquity. I never believed all this. He appeared to me to be, and I believe really was, a man of straight integrity, honest, upright, if rugged and sometimes uncompromising in speech. After he left Dublin it came out that he was continually shadowed by the Invincibles, who had arranged to polish him off on the quay before he embarked for England. Luckily he postponed his departure by a few hours and left by another boat, but this knowledge did not prevent him from bravely volunteering to fill the gap after the mournful tragedy of Phoenix Park. Forster's favourite relaxation was whist for high, and what some purists might call gambling, stakes; but his skill was not equal to his zeal, and it is reported that on one occasion when he had revoked or committed some other heinous offence, by way of reparation to his partner he said, "I will make any compensation you please: you may call me Buckshot if you like." This truly estimable and able man really sacrificed his life to the public service, for he was not in good health when he took over the heavy work of the Manchester Ship Canal Committee, and it is believed that his constant attendance from day to day really caused his death.

One of the most impressive scenes I ever witnessed was when he rose in the House not long after the Phoenix Park murders, with his gigantic frame swaying, his big voice passionately quivering, and his long finger

directed towards the Irish leader, denounced him with scathing terms. And Parnell, shrinking pale and cowed into his seat, had not the nerve to reply, and only on the next day did he rise in most ineffective style to clear his character and confront his foe. And then and still the impression was on my mind that although I make no accusation of complicity with crime, he failed to make it effectively clear that he disapproved the policy of that sad event, which for the time shattered his cause. It is, of course, known that Lord Frederick Cavendish, who had just arrived, was sacrificed to his zeal in defending his friend Burke, against whom, for reasons difficult to explain, the fury of those contemptible, sneaking hirelings was directed. And I never remember a sadder scene than when we all went from Chatsworth to Edensor churchyard to attend the funeral of as lofty a character and high-minded a patriot as ever went to Ireland with high hopes for the betterment of that mysterious country. And then we came back to the House, and Harcourt ran his Crimes Bill through all its stages, the Lords coming down specially to sit to get it through.

This mournful and discreditable business is one of the too many instances when the Irish apple-cart—to use a cant phrase—has been badly upset just as it was reaching home. For a clever people they are singularly tactless and ignorant of English character in the way they work their business, and although theirs, in comparison with ours, is a crimeless country, the lawless events that happen are of a violent and often cruel character, and take a strong hold on popular sentiment—cattle-maiming and driving, and moonlighting, and

boycotting and the like are to my mind only symptoms of a deep-seated disorder which only admits of one remedy, but they are deeply deplorable and alienate popular sympathy. One of the silliest and cruelest of all the Irish enterprises was in New Tipperary, where, to gratify a bit of Nationalist spite, the inhabitants of a perfectly peaceful and prosperous village were persuaded to evict themselves and leave their flourishing shops to face ruin and disaster. But the plan of campaign had a worse complexion, for it was a deep-laid conspiracy, and an only too successful one, to defraud the landlords. Impossible reductions were demanded, and when they were refused, the tenants who had the rents in their possession buttoned up their pockets, declined to pay, and were most properly turned out of their farms; and the evicted tenants' agitation which crops up from time to time is the singularly cool proposal that these misguided people, who were compelled by *force majeure* to do dishonest things, are to be replaced in the land which has been successfully cultivated by honest, law-abiding people. One reason, perhaps, why we hear so little now of this once burning question is that inquiry might be made as to the disposal of the plan of campaign funds, which were supposed to be held in trust from a committee of the Nationalist League. But where are they now? Echo answers "Where?" and the reply comes not.

A shabby thing was attempted in the House on the appointment of the judges of the Parnell Commission. A past or present minister, on the unsupported testimony of a Nationalist lawyer, whose name he only gave

up on compulsion, and who denounced Justice Day for some chance words of disparagement of Irish M.P.s spoken in a hotel smoking-room, gravely proposed to remove his name from the list, and a division was taken. I wish I could have summoned up courage to get up in my place in the House and denounce a course of procedure which would make social life impossible, but along with two other Liberals, one of whom was the present Master of the Rolls, and by whom I was congratulated on my independence, I had great pleasure in voting against my party and defeating this unworthy attack on a judge of proved capacity and integrity, who could not possibly have remained on the Bench if the vote had gone against him. In addition to his legal acquirements, he was a most humorous talker, a good judge of wine, of which he consumed an adequate, but not excessive quantity, and was an expert in art. He may be said to have been largely instrumental in the discovery of the Modern Dutch School, and his collection was a very fine one. And when they were dispersed after his death, the far-seeing wisdom of his choice was shown by a turnover of his expended capital by over 100 per cent.

Humour seems to be rather at a discount in the House at present, and since the Irish have got so deadly in earnest over Home Rule their native commodity has dried up. There is no one now to compare with Mr. Blake, who compared the House of Commons' whisky, in my hearing, to "a torch-like procession going down me throat"; and how he convulsed us (is such a thing possible?) by describing how the only time he hunted

he went out in the interest of the fox. Healy sometimes raises a bitter smile by his vitriolic comments on previous speakers, but the Belfast loyal and patriotic subjects of a King, whose authority they intend to defy when it suits their convenience, have no time to make us laugh. They are too busy digging their last ditch. Birrell is, of course, an easy first, and his wit resembles the summer lightning which illuminates without harming, rather than the forked variety which stings and mutilates in its course. It is perhaps unfortunate for this specially acute politician that his reputation as a humorist tends to obstruct his solid merit as a debater, but he is liked and respected on all sides, and it is difficult to decide whether he is at his best as a speaker or writer or genial companion over the walnut and the wine. But Ellis Griffiths is beginning to run him hard.

I have not heard F. E. Smith, but smart and clever as he is, his shafts sniff rather too strongly of the lamp to be supremely effective, and do not always hit the mark; and when Bonar Law tries to be funny he rather reminds me of an elephant on the tight-rope. His predecessor is a real master of swift and polished irony, admirably adapted for debating purposes. The greatest bore undoubtedly is—— But here I am getting on thin ice and had better make for the shore, from which secure haven we will now consider the Sergeant-at-Arms. This smartly costumed and awe-inspiring official only ranks behind the Speaker, but in some respects ahead, for has he not charge of the mace, the emblem of authority with which he heads the daily procession so dear to the strangers, whose hats fly off at the bidding of the

stentorian-lunged peeler who is in charge of the lobby, and from whose imperious orders there is no appeal. This "bauble," which, I believe, disappeared after the Cromwell days and had to be replaced, makes the House, and it is really to it, and not to the Speaker, that members bow on entry. The Sergeant helps to keep order, and when the faithful, or faithless, commoners are suspended, he sees them clear of the premises, and he is representative of the superior force with which Erskine's frail little predecessor metaphorically arrested the gigantic O'Gorman Mahon, and ensured his exit after a memorable and regrettable scene of disorder. In addition to this he issues orders for the House, and this department is under his special charge; he deals out lockers, and looks after the servants and the personnel. To him I will revert later.

I cannot imagine a more agreeable occupation than to be Chaplain of the House of Commons. He gets £400 a year for reading some short prayers; he is, to use the words of Queen Victoria, "Stammgast" at the Speaker's dinners, and sometimes he doubles the part of the incumbency of St. Margaret's, which is the parish church of St. Stephen's. The religious exercises have been sometimes gabbled through with a minimum dose of religious spirit, and they are never attended by Front Bench men whose seats are ear-marked, but only by the rank and file, who are thus able to secure a *pied-à-terre* for the evening. My first introduction to the devotional preface to our proceedings was furnished by the Hon. and Rev. Francis Byng, now Lord Strafford, whose somewhat perfunctory elocution did not gain in

impressiveness by a reputation for earlier transactions on the Turf, which it was rumoured required the efforts of his congregation to free him from pecuniary disaster.

Next came the Rev. H. White of the Savoy, who cemented the union between the Church and the Stage by his friendship with Irving. But the greatest of these was Farrar, whose earnest, priestlike face, and rich, thrilling tones sent us week by week to hear him preach his flowery but most attractive discourses in the adjoining St. Margaret's, where later Eyton used to stir us all up and set us a-thinking and mentally arguing under his most suggestive oratory.

The present incumbent of our chair, Canon Wilberforce, is a handsome man, thoroughly well groomed, and with the persuasive speech of his father; but as an ardent teetotaller he is something like the skeleton of the feast at the Speaker's banquets, and his attitude on the vivisection question has made him anything but beloved by the medical profession.

I have also known several Chairmen of Committees. Nothing could exceed Lord Courtney, as he now is, for prompt decision and absolute integrity and impartiality. The amiable and popular John Mellor was hardly strong enough, and made the unfortunate blunder of giving reasons for his decisions, one of which I specially remember: "Motions to orders may be in themselves disorderly," and he was unfortunately in the Chair when the free fight took place. Things got completely out of hand under his gentle sway, and it was only the appearance of the Speaker, who was hastily summoned, that evolved order out of chaos.

Sir Arthur Otway made no special mark, but I always felt that I should have liked to dress him up in doublet and hose and a slouch hat, and hang him up in the National Gallery as one of Franz Hal's *chefs-d'œuvre*.

Sir Lyon Playfair, who dreaded being knighted because he knew that the Hibernian patriots would call him "Sirloin," was physically unsuited for the job, being small and insignificant-looking, and with a vacillating manner which did not inspire confidence. But he will live in history as the inventor of the principle of collective obstruction, which he checked by the drastic procedure of suspending all the Irish Nationalists, many of whom were at the moment safely stowed away between the sheets. I used to have special pity for him because he suffered from gouty eczema in the legs, and had to forego the overwhelming temptation to scratch behind the trim black stockings which masked the irritating eruption, reminding me of a truly inimitable picture in *Fliegende Blätter*, where a man in full armour was being bitten by a flea, which was able undisturbed to range over the wide surface of integument in joyous freedom. The mechanical application of one foot to the opposite leg gave you an idea of the uncontrollable desire for scratching caused by the most worrying of all parasites.

Sir John Gorst only appeared once in the Chair, but the occasion was a memorable one, for he dashed through the notice paper at racing speed, gave his decisions, many of which were quite wrong, with inimitable promptitude, allowed no protest or contradiction, and retired amid cheers after having cleared off

all the orders of the day. And I understand that my old friend "Jimmie" Caldwell was equally successful in pounding along without the slightest reference to cranks or obstructions, for every one recognised his absolute familiarity with every law, written and unwritten, and precedent of the House.

Lowther, a model of courtesy, urbanity and firmness, with pinches of the saving salt of humour sprinkled in, laid the foundations of the admirable qualities which have made him by common consent one of the greatest of Speakers.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is an imposing personality, and when his trim figure and effective get-up is seen to head the Speaker's procession so dear to sight-seers, the meek yet determined dignity with which he carries the mace excites mingled feelings of awe and admiration which deeply impress the attendant crowd. His duties are responsible and varied, and are well summed up in the following statement kindly given me, at his request, by his son.

"The Sergeant-at-Arms is appointed by the Sovereign under a warrant from the Lord Chamberlain, and by patent under the Great Seal 'to attend upon His Majesty's person when there is no Parliament, and at the time of every Parliament to attend upon the Speaker of the House of Commons,' but after his appointment he is the servant of the House, and may be removed for misconduct.

"His duties are to attend the Speaker with the

mace on entering and leaving the House or going to the House of Lords, or attending His Majesty on dress occasions, to keep clear the gangway at the bar and below it, to take strangers into custody who are irregularly admitted into the House, or who misconduct themselves therein; to cause the removal of strangers whenever they are directed to withdraw; to give orders to the doorkeepers and other officials under him for the locking of all doors upon a division; to introduce with the mace peers or judges attending within the bar, on presenting petitions; to bring to the bar prisoners to be reprimanded by the Speaker, or persons to be examined as witnesses. For the better execution of these duties he has a chair close to the bar of the House; he is entrusted with the execution of all warrants for the commitment of persons ordered into custody by the House, and for removing them to the Tower or Newgate, or retaining them in his own custody. He serves by his messengers all orders of the House upon those whom they may concern. He also maintains order in the lobby and passages of the House. He gives notice to all committees when the House is going to prayers. He has the appointment and supervision of the several officers in his department, and as Housekeeper of the House has charge of all its committee-rooms, and other buildings, during the sitting of Parliament.

“The Sergeant-at-Arms is Housekeeper of the House by Act of Parliament.”

I have elsewhere referred to Gossett's room, where convivial spirits, in and out of Parliament, assembled to quaff their ambrosia, and soothe their savage breasts with the pipe of peace. Mr. Erskine, on assuming office, abolished this meeting ground, and I think he acted wisely, for a convivial centre of the kind added nothing to the dignity of Parliament and might be liable to abuse.

One of the most responsible and delicate, but sometimes disagreeable parts of the Sergeant's duty is to maintain order; and it bordered on the ludicrous to see frail little Gossett touching the gigantic O'Gorman Mahon on the shoulder when he defied the authority of the Chair, and only yielded to superior force. And the part he was compelled to take in the Bradlaugh scrimmage and the historical free fight must have been painful to a sensitive man.

Some of the duties of Whips are no doubt mysterious. Party funds have to be administered and honours bestowed on the most worthy. I never believed Hooley's story that when he was promised a baronetcy, to be engineered by Marriott, he was to pay £20,000, and that when he visited the Whips' room he saw hung up on the wall the tariffs for peerages and honours and decorations of all sorts. But it is quite reasonable to believe, and I see no harm in it, that if you are given something of that kind there may be some substantial consideration expected from the other side. It may be of vital importance when majorities are running low, as in C.-B.'s Government, to keep an outstanding majority always ready in case of a snap

division, and the regulation of pairs and necessity for driving the team with a tight yet elastic hand require tact and judgment. The services of Asher, the powerful Solicitor-General for Scotland, were lost because he was worried to come up from Edinburgh so often for unnecessary divisions as seriously to interfere with his practice. Now and then a little bit of espionage is necessary to see if excuses for absence are real or bogus. They say that a messenger sent to dig out McCombie found him turned in to sleep alongside of his cattle ; and the message returned from another Government supporter was that he was in bed and paired for the night. And I remember in my medical capacity being asked to visit a sick member and see whether his state of health absolutely prevented him from attending a critical division.

I cannot say that my ambition ever prompted me to aspire to such a position. It is an irksome job, and does not necessarily lead to higher promotion. The chief, usually called the Patronage-Secretary to the Treasury, is, of course, an important person. He arranges the business of the House in conference with the Prime Minister, he has a great deal to do with the selection of candidates and the administration of the party funds, and when his time is up he usually gets shoved into something more important. But his subs seem to have but a poor time of it. Much of their time is spent at the door as watchful sentinels, keeping up the Government majority by seeing that no one escapes unpaired. They are supposed to be the eyes and the ears, but not the tongues, of the ministry, for they are never allowed

to speak, but they are supposed—although the supposition does not invariably hold good—to move about among the members, consulting, persuading, giving information and stiffening the backs of the wobblers. A variety of personal and social qualities should combine to make an efficient wielder of the whipcord, and they were all combined in my old friend Causton, now Lord Southwark, for he was able, energetic, thoroughly informed, genial and hospitable. He became eventually Paymaster-General, and occupied the anomalous position of paying every one but himself, for one of his predecessors, who was a wealthy man, most foolishly refused to accept the salary, and although the work is not overwhelming, there is something to be done, and nothing to be got for doing it. Whether my friend's services during a long series of years have been adequately recognised is a subject on which I might have a few words to say if I dared.

When I entered the House tradition placed Adam in a position of almost mysterious reverence as a tactful amalgam for keeping a Party together. But he had gone to Madras for his regrettably short Governorship before I had a chance of serving under him. Lord Richard Grosvenor was a pleasant, easy-going kind of man lounging through passages and division lobbies in a lazy kind of way which effectually masked a good deal of determination. It was a great thing to keep in active touch with the great ducal House of Westminster, and their palatial abode was then a centre of hospitality frequently opened to the Liberals.

Difficulties sometimes arose with another powerful family, for three Fitzwilliams, uncle and two nephews,

then sat in the House, and they required careful handling, and Lord Richard, with his tact and suavity, was just the man to do it. Next came (I think) Arnold Morley, a remarkably handsome man with a good deal of the grand air about him, but so happily blended with *savoir faire* as to make him most successful, and he was believed to be more especially a *persona grata* with the chief and his staff. He eventually became Postmaster-General, and was most efficient; and I hold him in grateful memory, for he got me out of a serious scrape with an influential constituent who wished to become a postmaster, and whose candidature was seriously resisted by some of the leading people in the district, and did me the good turn of refusing to accept the nomination which I was officially compelled to give. Happily, we are now freed from the worry of this particular bit of patronage by which we used to make one lukewarm friend and many active enemies.

Then followed Marjoribanks, afterwards Tweedmouth, and I have already expressed my admiration of the varied gifts and accomplishments which made him an ideal holder of his responsible office. But what I did not say was that on the call of duty he deliberately continued in a post which had become distasteful to him, and gave up for the time the prospect of the promotion which was within his grasp. And then came the disastrous peerage which removed him from the House of Commons which he loved, and compelled him to take refuge in the lethal chamber where political ambitions are asphyxiated in an atmosphere of indifference and old-fashioned Toryism of the most unbending and unyielding type. Why fathers should thus deliberately

crush their sons' career to gratify an unnecessary social ambition quite passes my comprehension.

Tom Ellis came next, and I have already recorded my opinion of his failure. It was sad to see a round man rolling uneasily in a square hole, when he could have been comfortably accommodated in a variety of places quite congenial to his ability and attractive nature. But official acts of selection often give one "furiously to think." Herbert Gladstone always seemed to be too big for his job, not that he ever gave one that impression directly, for he threw himself cordially into his work, and by common consent did it admirably. But his talent and prestige deserved something much better, and it is understood that he patriotically resigned temporarily his claims to high Cabinet rank to help his party at a time of emergency. Nothing could be more genial and charming than his attitude to those whom he had to pull into the ranks of discipline. I only once had a little tiff with him, when I wrote a letter to protest against what I considered an error of judgment when the nominee of the Liberal party in a certain locality was withdrawn under official pressure to make way for an independent Labour man whom the constituency did not want. I held then, and I hold more strongly still, that every one who will not take the Liberal shilling and fall into line on all important occasions should be invariably opposed by an official candidate. Granted that the Tory will occasionally slip in, better that than an independent member on whom no one can depend, and who may desert the sinking ship when all hands should be at the pump.

Others came and went, and I have specially pleasant

memories of "Jack" Pease, who was always helpful, and came about as near doing the confidential part of the Whips'-room work as any of his predecessors. Of course we had not so much to do with the other side, but their staff were admirable from the point of view of personal efficiency.

The Whips were all told off to their proper stations and work. Some sit wearily and drearily at the door, thoroughly out of everything, and finding it hard to maintain their popularity when preventing members from slipping away to keep dinner and other engagements. And they themselves have to snatch a hasty meal when they can, and give up the opportunities for social enjoyment which are so freely offered them; and one must always be placed somewhere in the outer lobby lest the more dodgy and experienced practitioners sneak out by the back door. In former days there was the short but definite interval when the Speaker went out for what used to be called his chop, and at another time there was the two-hours' break from seven to nine, when the watchdogs were relieved from tension and could go home or elsewhere. But now the House sits straight through from find to finish, and the strain on the officials is so much the greater; and I have never approved, and once spoke on hygienic grounds against the present system of sitting right up to the end of the week without intermission. Formerly Wednesday evening was free, but now the House adjourns on Friday afternoon, when members knock themselves to pieces over week-ends, and it is difficult for the constituted authority to sprinkle salt on their tails and bring them up to the scratch to avoid danger on

Monday. My friend Southwark in his Whip days was in charge of London, and very well he did it. And another bit of duty which seemed specially congenial to him was the providing of speakers for political meetings all over the country. At first I fell a ready victim when I saw my friend coming up with his genial smile and asking whether I was engaged on a particular evening. Knowing his hospitable nature, and sniffing a good dinner, I fell into the trap, and found myself booked for the stump, and on reaching the scene of action not improbably found myself at the bottom of a long list of people far more important than myself, and compelled as a comparatively unknown man to bleat out stale platitudes to an exhausted audience. On one occasion I was supposed to be the principal speaker, and an appeal was made to allow some one else who wished to catch a train to take precedence. This I weakly did, and my courtesy was rewarded by a speech of over an hour and wearisome to the last degree, so that when I rose I could not catch on one little bit, and bored my audience as much as I did myself. And another time in London, after being very rudely interrupted three times and told that I was not speaking to the point, I abruptly resumed my seat, and the subsequent proceedings interested me no more. Since then it is hardly necessary to say I have not again officially aired my oratory in the Metropolitan area, but having been several times honoured with an invitation to open a debate at Toynbee Hall before an audience partly composed of Socialists, I may gratefully acknowledge the kindness, courtesy and encouraging appreciation with which I have invariably been treated there. But

then we must remember the high moral and intellectual tone set by Canon Barnett and his accomplished wife, and the band of cultured young enthusiasts who so successfully work that useful settlement.

One of the most interesting and important things I recollect was the disestablishment of the Metropolitan Board of Works. This was preceded by a debate and a Parliamentary inquiry, and I well remember the damaging evidence, and the vigorous defence made by the Chairman (the late Sir James MacGarrell Hogg, as the very puzzled footman struggling over his new name of Lord Maghelamorne announced him at dinner), of their proceedings and his own salary of £1200 a year. The indictment against them was not a very heavy one, and consisted of some almost defensible instances of corruption; but they had determined foes, and they were swept away. Still any one who remembers the filthy state of the Thames in the early eighties and earlier must feel grateful to them for constructing the Embankment.

To them succeeded the County Council, the outcome of a committee on which I sat, and the Local Government Bill most ably engineered by Ritchie, who would have made it a far more liberal measure if he had been allowed. But here, as in the case of the Corrupt Practices Act, the forces of reaction were too strong for their progressive authors, who were both Liberals at heart. Sir Henry James, it is currently stated, let the chance of the woolsack slip past him because he disapproved of Home Rule, but I have it on good authority that further reflection showed him how impossible it was to struggle against a national sentiment, and he was disposed to

recant what I may venture to call his error; and if he were still with us, I am sure that his vigorous common sense and keen sense of humour would have revolted against the pitiful Mrs. Partington attempts of the patriots and the loyalists, so-called, of Belfast to stem the Atlantic waves of progress. And Ritchie, successful as he had been in many important Cabinet posts, was jockeyed into retirement along with Lord George Hamilton and the Duke of Devonshire of the day because they would not surrender their Free Trade principles at the bidding of the master of philosophic doubt, who as a practitioner of the art of facing both ways has never been surpassed. It is well to let down a curtain—shall I rather say a funeral pall—on this already half-forgotten incident, so little creditable to the honour of British politicians.

The County Council made a good start. Lord Rosebery, then at the height of his fame, was induced to stand as President, and I attended his first meeting. He spoke with, even for him, unusual force and gravity, and told us that he would not have been there unless he had a distinct pledge that the election would not be fought on party lines; and then, as ever since, he extolled the work and the future of the Council, predicting its success, and rating its possibilities even higher than those of Parliament. But unhappily since then the bacillus of party warfare has eaten deeply into every contest, and victory there is considered a good omen for success in the wider arena. Firth was the first Vice-Chairman and had a salary of £2000, and I am sorry that this has not been continued, for the labourer is worthy of his hire, and the post makes heavy, if not

exclusive demands on its holder's time. Firth, who was supposed to have moulded his style on that of the great tribune, used to be called "a plaster of Paris Bright"; and I well remember his bumptious walk, his aggressive nose, his head well thrown back, his hands half completing their journey into his pockets, his dominant nasal twang, suggestive of smug Nonconformity and provincial domination. His King Charles head was the iniquity of the city companies, but the Royal Commission which he obtained only showed how judiciously they spent their money for charitable, educational and social progress, and how necessary their hospitalities were to maintain the prestige of the city.

A controversy in which I took some practical part was settled by an alteration of the law, and women, who were at first excluded, were then allowed to take their seats alongside of the men. But there was occupation in spite of great protest, much opposition and threatened penalties of places among the seats of the mighty—and I had the honour of presiding over a large and influential meeting in favour of the candidature of Miss Cobden, now Mrs. Fisher Unwin, who gave an eloquent and practical address. Among other speakers was my old friend Naoroji, Lord Salisbury's "black man," whom I introduced as being, like an eminent scriptural character, "not so black as he was painted."

In former days the business of my county was done by the Commissioners of Supply, the D.L.'s, headed by the Convener, who sat twice a year, talked in a pleasant conversational style, only interrupted by the annual vehement attack by Burnel of Kemnay on a most harmless grant given to Nazareth House, a sort of half

convent, half hospital in Aberdeen. The rejection of this he moved in a speech bristling with startling and unproved insinuations concerning the methods and morality of the Catholics, which excited Gordon of Wardhouse, a devoted adherent, almost to frenzy, and his fierce denunciation, punctuated by heavy stamps on the ground with a heavy cudgel, nearly led to blows, and a speedy break-up of the meeting, from which we adjourned to a perfectly amicable gathering at the Northern Club. How the business was done, and who did it, I never could find out; whether it is better done now I can hardly say. But at all events we have much more ostentatious evidence of its existence in the shape of medical officers of health, sanitary inspectors and other bureaucratic officials, who sometimes tread not too softly on the toes of old-fashioned people. We were very lucky in Aberdeenshire: Mr. Gordon of Newtoun, an experienced man of affairs, whose firm grasp of the business, clear business temperament and firm yet elastic hand on the reins ensured success at the start. And his successor, Mr. Duff of Hutton, promises equally well. Popular election, of course, had a good sound and has worked efficiently; but the agricultural class, except at first, has not been sufficiently represented owing to the unwise decision of the authorities not to allow travelling expenses, for it is not every farmer who can afford to lose a day's work, and to pay a heavy railway fare, and perhaps a night's lodging, for the service of the State.

The London County Council has been vehemently attacked, and no less energetically defended; but it has

now weathered the storm and sails in smooth waters. No one has ever successfully assailed its absolute integrity, and its members are generally able to show that if a good deal of money is spent, full value is given for it. The worst that can be said against it is that it becomes sometimes crankish. They possess the right of supervision over music-halls, and some years ago a worthy but over-puritanical and fussy person in his official authority reported a marionette performance. But when an inquiry was made it was found that this stern censor of morals either had not seen the sketch at all, or was so short-sighted that he could give no coherent account of what he claimed to denounce, reminding me of the chief constable of Manchester, who warned Maud Allan off the municipal hall although he had never even attempted to see her. Then a proposal was made, but properly squashed by public opinion, to abolish barmaids on the cruel and unproved ground of their immorality, as though any better means could be devised for turning them on to the street than to deprive them of this perfectly legitimate way of making a living. And the demand of motorists to get rid of flower-girls because they infringed somewhat on the space claimed by their cars of Juggernaut was promptly laughed, or sneered, out of court. We are not going to lose these centres of charming colour to please the plutocrat whose overbearing methods are responsible for some of our social unrest.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FROM INSIDE

I HAVE read, or, at all events, carefully surveyed all the recent books about the House of Commons, and excellent as they are, and in many cases far beyond what I can pretend to achieve, they fall short of mine in this respect. I propose in the following chapter to give a careful description of all the various departments, what they cost, and how they are arranged. I have had the advantage not only of first-hand information most kindly supplied by their heads, but of personal inspection, and I hope to serve up the whole in an appetising and digestible form.

First, let me digress to turn over the carefully compiled pages of the Civil Service estimates. We find some touches of real if unconscious humour. For instance, by a somewhat Gilbertian touch of irony, the Paymaster-General, whose office cannot be a sinecure, seeing that he employs two principal, four first-class, and twenty-six second-class clerks, one office keeper, four messengers, a coal porter and two housemaids, receives nothing for his trouble, whereas his assistant touches annually the snug income of £1000. This strange anomaly was caused by a rich holder of the office having refused to draw the salary, and the Govern-

ment always conscientiously desirous of doing a mean thing, now plume themselves on a substantial reduction in the National Budget.

My old friend Wallace, that wonderful and attractive blend of theologian, professor, popular preacher, newspaper editor, politician and barrister, used to make himself and us very merry over the trumpeters attached to the Lord Advocate's staff, and I here quote his racy speech—

“Fancy a charge of £320 for four trumpeters. This is the year 1890, remember that. There ought to be a certain chronological congruity between facts and dates. If the payment had been for bagpipes, I think, considering the national character of the music, my opposition would have been disarmed, and, at all events, it would have been left to an English member, like the senior member for Northampton, to challenge a vote of this nature. The trumpeters not only get £80 a year for the blasts they occasion, but they get more, because there is an item of £16 16s. 4d. for each of them under the head of salaries and allowances from the Consolidated Fund. I think, considering the inflictions which are imposed upon the community by these men, it would have been far more reasonable if their salaries had been reduced by the £16 odd instead of being augmented. Then they receive a uniform once every five years. I do think that is too bad. I have had experience of these trumpeters and know what they can do. I

have an early recollection of an event in my youth—a period which I need not connect with any historical or well-known date. At that time I repaired to the nearest assize town, out of curiosity, to see how justice was administered in the country in which I hoped, in the future, to be able to play a part, public or private. The procession from the place where the judges stayed to that in which they performed their functions was a terrible show, to my youthful imagination, and even in my later recollection it was a remarkable scene. The performance of these trumpeters was a terrible performance, if I may be permitted to say so. It was simply appalling, and the only consolation is that it afforded certain relief in some rationalistic doubts which I had entertained about the falling down of the walls of Jericho. . . . I do not see what good is done by making these frightful noises in the assize towns when the Scotch judges go there to dispense justice. It is never done in Edinburgh. The Lord Advocate never has a trumpet, unless he blows it himself. . . . The judges administer justice in Edinburgh without any trumpeting, and I do not see why they want the trumpeters in Jedburgh, which was always famous for its justice. The people of Jedburgh do not require trumpeters; they only require the hangman.”

Among the mysterious onhangers at the Viceregal Court in Dublin a salaried officer, called “a gentleman

at large," used to turn up annually for his salary. But this probably picturesque official no longer comes out into the open.

£150 for the Chelsea Physic Garden opens up a quaint chapter in ancient history, which I commend to the attention of my readers, and a curious questioner might like to know what His Majesty's Limner in Scotland limns, and what the Historiographer does in return for his £184 a year; but personally I prefer to forbear making inquiries behind the scenes of these picturesque bits of mediævalism.

Rather a quaint item is Publicans, Pedlars and Chimney-Sweepers' fees, which absorb £45 in Dublin, and it is curious to see that His Majesty's charities and bounties to such indigent and necessitous people as shall be approved of by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury only amount to £78 in Scotland, which does credit to the thrifty and saving habits of my fellow-countrymen. The Bishop of Sodor and Man gets £899, to be distributed among the incumbents and schoolmasters of the Isle of Man who, on the principle that every little helps, should be specially grateful for the nimble ninepence which swells the charitable grant.

Compensation for the loss of the privilege of printing and vending almanacs, originally granted to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge by Royal Charter under the Great Seal, £1000 equally divided; whilst the Corporation of London are compensated in the sum of £175 per annum for the loss of the Middlesex shrievalty.

Here is a flagrant instance of class, or rather sex, distinction, for the shorthand writers. No one would

grudge them the most ample remuneration for the work that they do so admirably. They get £2 a day, whereas women transcribers, who perform equally technical work equally well, have to be contented with the meagre pittance of 27s. 6d., and the female typists only get a minimum wage of 20s. But the weak point of women workers is that they do not combine, and that there are hundreds of applicants for every vacancy that arises.

Art lovers will, I think, agree with me in thinking that the Government contributions to our national galleries are miserably inadequate, so that when something really important comes into the market, private charity has to be drawn upon to prevent the desired treasure slipping away to foreign lands. For we only give £5000 to England, £1000 to Scotland, and £1000 to Ireland, and yet we pose on suitable occasions as a cultured and progressive people, and this meanness is worse because our national collection, and I defy contradiction to this, is, take it all over, the finest in the world, and under the able and fostering care of Sir Charles Holroyd, it is now admirably and scientifically arranged to suit the convenience of the casual observer, and the educational ambitions of those who wish to take advantage of the skilfully-devised plan which sorts the various schools into representative rooms where their special characteristics can be conveniently and easily studied.

I am sorry to see that the rat-catcher no longer comes up officially for his salary, for this useful official, when it was desirable to obstruct Government business or keep off some inconvenient bill by exuberant oratory

on its predecessor, has been the text for ingenious talk, and I should like to have consulted him as to the best way of clearing one's premises of these inconvenient pests. Our principal operator in Aberdeenshire had a somewhat lurid reputation for working on American lines, because he abstracted Lord Crawford's body from the mausoleum in hopes of a ransom. Meanwhile the hue and cry went out, and every hole and corner was explored, the search even extending to Finzean, where a disused ice-house, sunk deep into the ground, was entered in the middle of the night at some risk to limb if not life. And a dramatic appearance on the scene was that of the dog Morgan, whose reputation had been made by his detection of the cut-up body of a child hung up a chimney in the murderer's house, but whose nose was so much distracted by tempting ground game whiffs along the avenue that no business was done; though the body was soon afterwards found peacefully reposing in a ditch close to the house.

A mysterious item is £350 for the deputy keeper of the signet in Edinburgh, and £150 for his substitute, and although I am Scotch to the backbone, I am quite unable to conjecture what the signet is and why it should be kept.

That ghastly failure, the Imperial Institute, whose rooms are now occupied by the University of London, drags out a precarious existence on £2000 a year, and I strongly object to the policy which renders it necessary to pay the colony of Hong Kong £12,000 annually for the loss of revenue caused by the restricting of the trade in opium.

I should like this charge to be paid by that upright and able, but I think mistaken man, Mr. Alexander, and the society which he so efficiently conducts.

Distressed British subjects, somewhere and for something, do not seem to be overpaid by an annual contribution of £250, and I should much like to ask some cultured person what the International Geodetic Institution is and why it should enjoy the salary of £300. True to their immemorial policy of loading Ireland with benefits, the distressful country gets £16,867 for the purchase of areas for afforestation in a country notoriously unsuited for tree-growing, whilst Scotland, whose timber-growing is the admiration of experts, gets nothing; Sligo harbour, of which no one on this side of the Channel has ever heard, bags a snug contribution of £20,000, whereas Peterhead, whose harbour is absolutely essential to provide work for convicts, very nearly had her £32,000 taken away from her by an avaricious Dover House; and of all wastes of public money, the most useless is the £1563 expended on King's plates in Ireland, whereby the propagation of the breed of skinny and unsuccessful race-horses is encouraged at the expense of the rate-payers. And for the life of me, I can't see why the Mallaig extension railway can't pay its own way, and why we should have to pay £200 a year to keep it going.

I rather envy the mental calibre of he or she who understands what the International Seismic Association is, and why it should draw on our funds for £370 a year, and a quaint item is £10,000 for Government hospitality, some of which I still cherish the fond hope may

come my way. £1750 for the expulsion of aliens is surely well-spent money, and I only wish it were more in amount and more extensively applied, whilst I think the post of Messenger of the Great Seal would just about suit me, for the duties cannot be very heavy and £250 would be a substantial addition to my somewhat exiguous income. £40 for powder to fire the Edinburgh time-gun cannot be regarded as excessive, and a most curious item is the Embezzled Charities Recovery Fund which, however, only draws £34 from us, and does not apply to the too numerous tribe of absconding solicitors, who are now peacefully playing bridge with their clients' money in Spain. Why Spurn Point works should get £800 a year, and why they should want to "replace a groyne" is a mystery which would probably be solved about the same time as we are told what some mysterious estates are, upon which we must look with respect because they pay fees of £150 to the State.

We approach the subject of Secret Service money with cautious footsteps and bated breath, and it is probably best that we should not know where the annual £50,000 goes and who gets it.

In the course of our perambulation we find some strange anomalies. Why should Scotch judges, a capable set of men, get only £3500 a year, whilst their brethren over the border, who are not a bit better, luxuriate on £5000? Why should the Scotch sheriff only touch from £700 and (rarely) £1000, whilst his English colleagues, who do less work, are "the justices with fat capon lined" on £1500? I have heard these

questions debated over and over again in the House of Commons, and never was in any way convinced by the answers given. But I must pull up now and leave my readers to digest the information I have flung at them rather hurriedly. For further details I must refer to the instructive Blue or rather White Book which, like Whittaker and other books of the kind, contains a deal of "fine confused feeding" adapted for a stuffy day in June. You can buy the book for 5s. or, better, borrow it from your Member, who, if he is a Liberal, like a friend of mine, may perhaps slake your thirst for information by the full draught conveyed by the acquisition of the tightly-packed 600 pages full of curious and instructive details.

For pleasant, sometimes instructive, often amusing browsing through an admirably arranged mass of financial detail, commend me to the big volume of 607 pages which gives a very readable summary of our annual expenditure. From this we will see that £3,763,343 are spent on Class I, including the Houses of Parliament, to which we will make more detailed reference. £5,006,875 goes to defray the charges for the civil departments, Lords and Commons offices, Treasury, Home Office, Foreign and Colonial Privy Council, Board of Trade, Local Government Board, Scotland and Ireland. Class III accounts for £5,472,636, and is concerned with Law and Justice. Then comes £19,711,228 for education; science and art in Class IV. Next Class V, £1,178,134. For Foreign and Colonial Services, Class VI, £13,011,001. For non-effective and charitable services, Class VII,

£252,410. Miscellaneous, Class VIII, £304,462 for Insurance and Labour Exchanges.

There is a delusion, commonly believed, that these vast and annually growing charges are carefully examined and debated in Committee of Supply. I am sorry to shatter a comfortable belief, but nothing can be further from the truth. The committee of public accounts is a very useful body, but its powers are purely critical and limited, and the voting of the money takes place downstairs. A proposal has been made, and I think, carried, to subject all these details of expenditure to another expert body who will thresh out every item and submit them in peptonised form to the House. I am not quite satisfied that this would work well. The House is very jealous of any interference with its rights and privileges, and it would almost be inevitable that the pushing cranks and pedants who are lurking about on the green benches would get nominated and destroy public confidence. But nothing can be worse than the present system under which I have witnessed the scandal of millions of public money being voted away under the closure without a single word of examination or debate. The only possible remedy for this is some scheme of devolution which will free the clogged wheels of the parliamentary machine from the obstruction of local matters, and give it full scope to manage the larger questions of imperial policy and finance.

The most interesting and not the least important part of the House of Commons' work is done by the committees. The special point of interest being that members are able to do something themselves instead

of sitting like waxwork figures listening to the dreary drone of talk that drips from other mouths, and important, because they attend to small domestic matters which are beneath the Olympic majesty of the imperial chamber itself. Let us dissect the anatomy of their construction.

Every member is obliged in turn to serve on a Private Bill Committee, and he gets a blue paper at the beginning of the session asking him when it would be most convenient to sit. He gets ample notice of the appointed date, but before he is summoned he must sign a declaration that he is not officially or otherwise interested in the bills to be considered.

The committees assemble upstairs during the sitting of the House; they consist of sundry members, three being a quorum; they sit from 11.30 to 3.30, with an interval for lunch, and attendance is compulsory, any member absenting himself being reported to the House. On one occasion Mr. Donald Sullivan refused to attend, and was ordered to do so. What would have happened if the refusal amounted to defiance, I can hardly imagine. Some one was once asked what happens if a member is named, and he replied, "God knows," but this has now become of such frequent occurrence that the punishment quickly follows, if it does not fit the crime.

It has always been a matter of surprise to me why these tribunals, constituted of all sorts and conditions of men, varying widely in capacity and judicial tone of mind, should command so completely as they do the public confidence. The reasons are, I fancy, that

common-sense and knowledge of affairs ensure satisfactory decisions, that reasons for those decisions are never given, and that the chairmen are very carefully chosen, and are always men of position and experience.

The Committee of Selection, on which I sat for many years, is appointed annually and consists of eleven members, three being a quorum, and it arranges the committees and appoints the members after careful consideration of their special fitness. And it also selects the grand or standing committees on law, trade, and Scottish affairs, to which are referred non-contentious bills that have passed their second reading downstairs. They consist of not less than sixty or more than eighty members, fifteen experts being added for special bills, but strictly for these alone because they retire when their particular bill is finished. Those are also put on who spoke for or against the bill on the second reading, or whose names are on its back. The chairman has the same powers concerning closure and irrelevance of debate possessed by the chairman of Committee of Ways and Means in the House itself, and no detailed report of the proceedings is made or preserved. A quorum of twenty is necessary before the proceedings can start, and it must be maintained, so that when the number is nicely balanced no member is allowed to leave the rooms. Great pressure is often put on the Committee of Selection by members who from objects of personal ambition or in the interest of their constituents wish to serve on one of these bodies, and this and other factors show that the work of that committee is of much delicacy and sometimes difficulty, and it is only after

long experience and careful balancing of the claims and capacity of members that arrangements can be made in a satisfactory way. During my time, we were most fortunate in our chairmen. First, Sir John Mowbray, the Father of the House, a man of much sagacity and well-balanced judgment, and then the Rt. Hon. T. F. Halsey, a worthy successor in every way.

There is also the Standing Orders Committee, who consider "all reports of the examiners, stating that the standing orders have not been complied with," the Public Accounts Committee appointed annually consisting of eleven members, five to be a quorum, who consider the accounts for the financial year ending on the 31st of March. Then there is the Public Petitions Committee, to which are referred those numerous documents slipped into the bag at the back of the Speaker's chair, those that are presented publicly, and those massive documents containing perhaps thousands of signatures.

It is almost, I may even go so far as to say quite, impossible to persuade the general public that members of Parliament are not paid for serving on committees; and I heard the other day an old and experienced parliamentarian arguing, and would not be convinced to the contrary, that fees were paid to Royal Commissions. If a member joins a departmental committee, and has to travel out of London, he receives his railway fare, and £1 a day subsistence money, which barely covers his necessary expenses; but that is all the public money he ever touches for this class of work. There is a regulated scale of fees for evidence before Select

Committees—a physician, barrister in practice, civil engineer, and sometimes an architect get £3 3s. a day; general practitioner, solicitor, and land surveyor, £2 2s.; clergymen, £1 1s.; gentlemen not in any of the above professions (and, therefore, I suppose entitled to be so described), £1 1s.; pilots, £1 1s.; tradesmen, 15s.; mechanics, 10s.; labourers and others from 5s. to 7s.; and then special arrangements are made in compensation for loss of time.

A Select Committee is appointed to control the arrangements for the kitchen and refreshment rooms in the department of the Sergeant-at-Arms. The committee consists of seventeen members: seven of whom are the sub-committee, of which three form a quorum.

A subsidy of £2000 is voted by Parliament.

There are employed regularly during the session a staff of ninety domestics, consisting of cooks, waiters, carvers, porters, tea-room maids, etc., etc.

The rates of pay for waiters varies from £1 to 30s. per week, with food and refreshments.

The hours of labour are from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., with intervals for rest, and half of the staff goes off duty at 9.30 alternate nights, those on duty till 11 on Mondays and Wednesdays are not on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and vice versa.

On Friday the House usually adjourns at five o'clock, and the staff are finished about six o'clock.

On Saturday the staff are engaged at cleaning the plate, etc., and finish at one o'clock. They are not required again until Monday at nine o'clock.

The staff that are on duty when the House is sitting

until 1.30 receives an extra half-day's wages, and after 3.30 one day's wages.

The staff are paid full wages during the Easter and Whitsun vacations. The manager, assistant manager, head waiter are paid a yearly salary. The chef, head cashier, head waiter (Terrace Dining Rooms), cellar clerk, smoking-room head waiters are paid a retaining fee during the long vacations.

In addition, the regular staff are supplemented by the engagement of extra waiters, cooks and porters daily (sometimes about fifty a day), according to the business that is estimated will be done; this is very uncertain, and is one of the chief difficulties the department has to contend with, both as regards the preparation of food and the engagement of extra staff. Often the House is counted out or stands adjourned unexpectedly, with great loss to the committee.

Extra waiters are paid 6s. for serving luncheon and dinner, or 3s. 6d. for serving dinner only.

Terrace tea waitresses are engaged daily during the summer season (from three to six) and are paid 2s., with refreshments.

Among the notable functions dealt with last year (1911) were the Coronation and Royal Progress Luncheons, and the Luncheon of Welcome to Representatives of the Dominion Parliaments in the Westminster Hall, when 6243 persons were catered for in addition to the ordinary business of the department. The Harcourt Room was also the venue for several interesting international gatherings at luncheon and dinner.

The kitchen, larders and wine cellars are of interest to a great many visitors to the Palace of Westminster.

The number of meals served in the department during 1911—

Breakfasts	.	.	1,060
Luncheons	.	.	38,818
Dinners	.	.	53,701
Teas	.	.	90,522
Suppers	.	.	1,222
Meals at Bars	.	.	4,368
Total			<hr/> 189,691 <hr/>

and the wages paid, expenses and laundry, etc., £7,208 8s. 4d.

Mr. King kindly gave me a walk through the kitchen which, like everything else in this strangely constructed House, is much too small and where the heat seemed to me quite overpowering. But I found the chef, a naturalised Frenchman, an excellent disciplinarian, as well as a good cook, bravely slicing ham with enviable dexterity, and looking after his nineteen assistants. He draws a salary of £7 a week, with a retaining fee during the off season, which he generally spends working in the provinces. No foreign meat is used, and the 1s. dinner of two cuts from the joint, with vegetables and cheese, is much appreciated.

From there we went to the cellars, where £8000 worth of wines and spirits and malt liquors are stored in appropriate temperatures, and I was specially interested to see the big vat of "Royal Household Blend Whisky," fifteen under-proof and ten years old, and containing 1000 gallons. I saw all the leading brands of champagne 1904 in drinking order, 1906, waiting for

the maturing hand of time, and all to be drunk at cost price. Light claret bottled on the premises, and worth more than the humble 10*d.* at which it can be consumed; and I was amused at little tenpenny bottles of whisky with corkscrew attached, which are in high favour with the Irish members to take home as night-caps. Cigars ranging from 4*d.* to 3*s.* are also laid down in large quantity.

Besides the Kitchen Committee, there is also a Select Committee on Commons, nominated partly by the House and partly by the Committee of Selection, to which are referred all reports made by the Board of Agriculture under the Commons Act, 1876, notifying the expediency of issuing orders for the inclosure or regulation of a common.

There are sometimes joint committees of Lords and Commons, whilst the Police and Sanitary Committee, which is annually appointed, and the construction of which sometimes gives rise to debates in the House, is extremely hard-worked, as I know from personal experience, and considers very complicated questions dealing with the health and convenience of the people. But their decisions sometimes come in conflict with a certain class of public opinion, and when we restrained the Salvation Army at Eastbourne from making themselves a public nuisance by their loud harsh bands playing during Church hours, spoiling the amenity of the sands, and injuring the health of the sick, after heated debate our decision was reversed by the House of Commons. On another occasion we established an admirable precedent by going in a body to inspect a

locality where questions of land boundary were in dispute, and in half-an-hour we cleared up difficulties which had only been made more complicated by the explanation of counsel and the conscientious contemplation of large maps.

There is always competition to get on select committees, which often deal with matters of great interest, and as they are appointed half by the House and half by the committee of selectors, the good offices of the Whips are often invoked to help members to attain the object of their ambition. It is sometimes a matter of keen and angry controversy as to which bills shall go upstairs to the Standing Order Committees and which shall be referred to the committee of the whole House. If the former is chosen they are quickly debated and run through by practical and specialised men, and sent down for further consideration and ratification in a peptonised form. If the latter, in these days of congestion and obstruction and ingenious traps and pitfalls for the unwary, their days are numbered, and they are included among the innocents whose massacre is one of the leading features of the dog days. And until we adopt Sir Edward Clarke's practical suggestion and resume consideration of bills the next session at the point where they were dropped at the last, we shall have to go on lamenting the loss of time and temper and opportunity involved in these annual sacrifices of good and useful measures at the shrine of hurry and crankism and vested interest and pure cussedness, which can only be cured by far-reaching measures of devolution.

It is rather the blue ribbon of the police service to be employed at the House of Commons, where they are treated with inordinate respect by outsiders and with friendly consideration by those within the pale. They are seldom changed, for it is most important that they should know the members by sight, and not stop some one who has paid dearly for his right of entry. I believe that when Lord Randolph Churchill returned from abroad, broken and bearded, and already in the throes of the dire disease which soon afterwards carried him off, he was not recognised; and Parnell in one of the disguises which gave melodramatic point to his chequered career, was also an object of suspicion to the door keepers. And I defy any one to have identified poor Tanner when he reappeared, pale, emaciated, and evidently dying after a long absence. These tried and trusty exponents of law and order are paid 1s. extra a day for their work, which is not difficult, but is sometimes complicated by suffragists or unruly Irish, and under these trying circumstances their tact and temper are quite admirable. When the militant suffragists, trading on the privileges of their sex, fall on the ground and kick and bite and scratch and pull the hair, and spit in the faces of the accredited representatives of law and order, they must be removed somehow, and the complaint is then made that unnecessary violence has been used. I believe none of these tales, any more than I pay any serious attention to the accusations freely made against doctors and prison officials. I regard them all as made under the influence of that hysterical quality of mind which encourages occasional

deviations from the strict paths of veracity. I really was sorry for the police on that most memorable occasion when the Irish patriots refused to leave the House for a division, and they were called in to take them out. And I will never forget the sight of a full-grown and apparently sane individual seated in the arms of Bobby, gesticulating wildly and singing "God save Ireland."

I have always appreciated the estimate of the constabulary in Mr. Lowes Dickinson's brilliant *Modern Symposium*, and as not one per cent. of my readers is likely to recall the passage, I take leave to quote it: "The policeman is a permanent public defiance of Nature. Through him the weak rule the strong, the few the many, the intelligent the fools. Through him survive those whom the struggle for existence should have eliminated. He substitutes the unfit for the fit. He dislocates the economy of the universe. Under his shelter take root and thrive all monstrous and parasitic growths. Marriage clings to his skirts, property nestles in his bosom. And while these flourish, where is liberty?"

The query at least suggests the freedom of the Press, and therefore I next touch upon that, at least in its parliamentary aspect.

The arrangements for reporting in the House of Commons were formerly unsatisfactory, not to say chaotic. My readers will remember that it was once a high crime and misdemeanour to let the public know what was going on in the House, for which reporters paid by the loss of their ears, and I understand that the

standing order making it a gross breach of privilege to print or publish anything relating to the proceedings of either House, is but a relic of those distant days when the perpetual conflicts between the Commons and the Crown made secrecy a necessity of debate (vide *The Mother of Parliaments*, chap. xvi).

Old Johnson once had a seat in the gallery, and evolved the debates out of his inner consciousness or a defective memory, always taking care that "those Whig dogs should not have the best of it."

Parliamentary reporting might at any moment be checked by some objectionable Member spying strangers, which of course they are, and causing the gallery to be cleared. This was done over and over again by O'Connell, who had a quarrel with the members of the fourth estate, who revenged themselves by ignoring his speeches. But he caused the gallery to be cleared night after night, which soon brought about a compromise.

I suppose that the name of Hansard will continue to be connected with parliamentary reporting till the end of time, but his contract, which was a private one, and which began in 1803, was never very satisfactorily carried out, and after many vicissitudes of fortune, terminated in 1888. Eyre & Spottiswoode, Messrs. Waterlow, and Messrs. Wyman then took on the job with varying success, and it was not till 1907 that the Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates made its report with recommendations which were adopted by the Government, and then my old friend, Mr. Dods Shaw, was induced to give up a much better appoint-

ment as Director of the Central News Agency, and put himself at the disposal of the Speaker to evolve order out of chaos, and put the gallery work into something like business form, and he has most kindly given me the following excellent account of the present arrangements addressed to a correspondent—

“In response to your letter I have pleasure in sending a specimen of the Official Reports of Debates issued early every morning under the authority of the House of Commons. This assembly employs for the purpose of preparing these reports a skilled staff of twelve shorthand writers, under the control of an editor and assistant editor, who arrange the turns of duty each evening, supervise the work of the staff, send to the printers promptly in a quick succession of dispatches the transcripts of the shorthand notes, revise corrections suggested by members whose speeches are reported, and settle any points of doubt or difficulty which may have arisen in taking notes of the parliamentary debates. The more responsible of these duties devolve mainly upon the editor who, acting under the authority of the Speaker and the Treasury, appoints the reporting staff, fills up any vacancies that may occur, and makes provision for such emergencies as all-night sittings. The salaries paid for a session of normal length are as follows : editor, £600 per annum ; the assistant editor, £400, and the reporters £300 each per annum. Extra payments are voted in case

of extraordinary prolongations of session. The official reports are printed under contract by a firm of printers by whom the daily issues are bound together and published in volume form every three weeks. They are supplied free to Members of Parliament, and may be purchased by the public at a very moderate price. Shorthand clerks and secretaries are employed in most of the public departments of the State for correspondence, conferences, etc. The work of our official reporting staff is, however, confined to the ordinary public sittings of the House of Commons and does not extend to meetings of committees, commissions, or sections of any kind. The official reporters dictate most of their notes to typewriters, which is found a material assistance in getting the work speedily out of hand. The shorthand notes and the transcripts are both preserved for a reasonable time for reference. The reporters carefully revise their transcripts before these are sent to the printers, and members have an opportunity of correcting their speeches in the daily parts before these are embodied in volume form. Parliament is thus enabled to rely upon the substantial accuracy and fulness of the official reports, which are therefore appreciated as valuable, not only for immediate reference during the progress of any debate, but also as a permanent record."

Mr. Shaw tells me that he gets frequent applications from the colonies and elsewhere, whose Parliaments

wish to mould their proceedings on the example of their Alma Mater.

Members will remember the old voluminous proofs submitted to them, and which were often sent back late or not at all, or else corrected out of recognition by rapid and impetuous orators, whose hurried and perhaps confused utterances escaped the ear or confused the mind of the clerks sitting up aloft, whose business it is to shape the ends of the unhewn sentences. This is all changed now, and much for the better. I am now quoting from the Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Official Report of Monday, June 10—

“No proofs of the daily reports are sent. Any corrections which members desire to suggest in the report of their speeches for the bound volume should be indicated in this Daily Report, and the copy of the Daily Report containing the suggestions corrected must be received in the Debates Room, House of Commons, by Friday, June 14, 1912.”

Each reporter has a “turn” of a quarter of an hour, and then dictates what he has “clinked down with his stylographic pen” to typewriters, but they continue to be responsible for what they have written. And their accuracy is well known and appreciated, for the Prime Minister in sending back the reproduction of a long speech, congratulated Mr. Shaw on its excellence, and said that he had only to alter one word.

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The Postal Department of the House is efficiently worked, and does a roaring trade, as the following official return, kindly furnished me by the Postmaster, Mr. Lincoln, will show—

1911 POST OFFICE HOUSE OF COMMONS

NATURE OF BUSINESS		NUMBER
Money Orders	Issued	248
	Paid	236
Postal Orders	Issued	7,243
	Paid	831
Express Services		2,856
Registered Letters		1,703
Parcels	Sent	1,401
	Delivered	2,030
Letters, Packets, &c. . . .	Posted	910,000
	Delivered	1,140,000
Telegrams	Sent (ordinary)	27,388
	(press).	45,690
	Delivered (ordinary). . .	21,934
	(press).	1,121
Telephone Calls		11,644
Stamps Sold		£3,484 17s. 3d.

The only direct benefit derived by members is the privilege of using the telephone, but only throughout the United Kingdom, free, and the sending of bills and parliamentary papers without charge. The enormous correspondence incurred by our legislators is a very heavy pecuniary tax, and motions are annually made, not to recur to the old and much-abused franking system, but to allow letters posted within the precincts of the House to be excused the formality of stamps. But this would involve a heavy expenditure, and it is to be hoped that £400 a year may be some compensation

to modern members for not getting their postage gratis.

By the courtesy of the First Commissioner of Works I was allowed to visit the Clock Tower, and a very good though somewhat laborious time I had there on one of the hottest days in June, along with my friend Eugene Wason. To begin with, we had to climb 300 steep and dimly-lighted steps, but when we had puffed our way to the top we were amply repaid for our exertions. First, we saw the face itself, the length of the big hand being fourteen feet, and of the small nine feet. In former times the winding was done three times a week, and occupied five hours, but now an electric machine only takes twenty-five minutes to do the work; the pendulum is twenty feet long, and the clock only loses one and a half minutes a week. Big Ben weighs thirteen tons ten cwt., and its smaller companions three to five cwts., and we heard them all strike. The clash and boom and reverberations were perfectly overwhelming, and the thumping bang on my membrane tympanæ made me dread for a moment that the integrity of these structures might have been perilously compromised by the strain to which they were subjected. From the proud elevation of 320 feet, which we eventually reached, I saw the most magnificent panorama of London that can possibly be imagined, and realised for the first time how vast and picturesque it is, and how fine are its public buildings.

I had pictured all kinds of grim arrangements for the occasional prisoners, Bradlaugh being the last, but there is nothing romantic about their housing, for they simply

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inhabit rooms usually occupied by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and they live in perfect comfort up an easy flight of thirty steps. Detention loses half its poetry when it is agreeable. I have always believed that the finest lyrics came from a starving bard, the most introspective from one who had dined wisely but well.

CHAPTER VII

SOME CRITICISMS AND COMMENTS

NOTHING has amazed me more in the course of my long observation, not official, but more or less casual—but then onlookers are said to see the most of the game—than the shabby things that are done by ministers and corporate bodies, which if perpetrated by private individuals would lead to social boycott. I have already hinted in “another place” how the imperious will of Randolph Churchill, after vainly dashing itself on the impregnable rock of “Marshall & Snelgrove,” rebounded on to Sir Stafford Northcote. And this victim of the schoolboy impatience of the younger man, after being shunted up to the House of Lords, was then abruptly, and for no possible reason, removed from the post of Foreign Secretary. And to this harsh and cruel treatment I deliberately assert was due his sudden death. Another murder as direct as though the butcher’s knife had been drawn across his throat, was that of a nobleman, who having most efficiently conducted the minor affairs of a great spending department in one government, when it was reframed, naturally expected his reappointment. But he was left out in the cold to make way for a rat who had left the sinking ship when it was labouring in the slough of despond, and had come back when it had righted itself. But he, too, had to be

retired somewhat summarily, when he proved himself incompetent to explain the Government policy of his own department to the Lords, and it was then too late to make reparation to his predecessor, for he had already gone to where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Another time a personal friend of my own was deprived of a post which he had served with admitted efficiency, to make way for the relation of a pushing young minister. Caine and Bob Brand, who told against us in a vital amendment, were both promoted when we came in again, one to the Admiralty and the other to a governorship, whereas a strenuous, able and consistent supporter, both in and out of office, was denied a place that he desired on the frivolous ground that his seat was unsafe. And yet they expect to hold parties together and encourage loyalty and enthusiasm by such means as this.

But the War Office went one better than all this at the imperious bidding of a very superior person, who had got the ear of the late King, by creating a body called the Army Council, composed of nobodies, who never have commanded the confidence of the country, and are only saved from disaster by the ability of the permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Edward Ward. The first thing this egregious body did was to shunt the Commander-in-Chief, and the reward Lord Roberts received for his inestimable services to his country was to find a letter on his office table one morning that his services were dispensed with, and protest was useless. The Adjutant-General, Sir T. Kelly-Kenny, a great soldier, and one of the few successes of the South

African War, followed him into retirement without as much notice as you give your cook, and the height of grotesque and almost farcical insolence was reached when a prominent official seated at his desk, beheld a stranger walk into his room and hang up his coat on a peg. On politely asking him to what he owed the honour of his visit, the reply was, "I have come to take your place." And he did. Now, I have a strong feeling, whatever my opinion is worth—not much, perhaps, but it is, at all events, worth consideration—that it is much better to have a titular head at the Horse Guards for us to attack if necessary. It is difficult to get at a corporate body. They shuffle and wobble about, and pass on the individual responsibility like the football at a Rugby scrimmage, to some one else, who then takes his run and you probably can't catch him. The Duke of Cambridge undoubtedly remained too long in office, when his natural caution and old-fashioned prejudices sometimes stood in the way of reforms, but, as he used to say, and perhaps truly in a measure, he only wished not to be rushed, but to have time to consider anything new and adopt it if he thought it right. And he was a hard-working and most devoted public servant, and no one ever accused him of being under any kind of smart or feminine influence. It is always dangerous for an old soldier, or indeed any old man, to be suddenly deprived of his habitual occupation, and this useful and conscientious public servant did not live very long after he gave up work. But he was keenly alive to his responsibilities as a citizen, and I had the honour of meeting him and being presented to him at the annual dinner

of the Sanitary Institute, of which I am a vice-president. He attended this most regularly, played a good knife and fork, was gracious to all, and made most admirable speeches, showing a keen interest in the progress of sanitation, and the interests of the society. He was also frequently to be seen at other public banquets, but I do not know whether his contributions to their charitable funds were made as prudently as by his father, who was devoted to that class of business, and always intimated a contribution of £20 to their charitable funds, "pour encourager les autres," which he was not expected to pay. I think I may now venture to tell the story of the poor man's ejection from office, as it was confided to me by C.-B. It seemed to be necessary to persuade the Duke to retire, for war complications were in the air, and he was perhaps too old and too conservative to deal with them. Possibly these ideas were wrong, for things could not have been worse than they became. Trouble was threatened in the Radical quarter by Morton, and the Duke was told that his reputation might suffer if the whole question were brought up for debate in the House of Commons. "What do I care about Mr. Morton?" he said. "Could he do what I have done to-day? Leaving London by an early train, superintending a field-day at Aldershot, inspecting the camp, spending many hours in the saddle;" and at first Queen Victoria backed him up and objected to the supersession of her cousin. But when crafty C.-B. said, "Do you not think, ma'am, that the retirement of the Duke might make way for the appointment of your son as commander-in-chief?"

then she swung round, and became an enthusiastic supporter of the anti-ducal policy. And so the change was made; but I always thought that the old man was harshly treated in this, that he was most anxious to take the trooping of the colours for the last time, and they would not let him. Then came Wolseley, and there has been some misapprehension about this, for it is popularly believed that C.-B. wished to appoint Buller. Now this is not so, for although C.-B. had the highest admiration for him, and called him in my hearing "the best business man I ever met," he felt that Wolseley's claims could not be overlooked, for he was in the estimation of C.-B. "that great soldier." What a different complexion things might have assumed if Wolseley, who had never failed in anything he undertook, had been allowed to take his proper place in the field instead of remaining at home to be thwarted and obstructed at every turn by the Minister of War. I once urged my friend Sir William Butler to enter the House and expose, as he could so well have done then, and as he has now done in his epoch-making book, the rotten policy which landed us in such grievous disasters and gave a fatal blow to our military prestige. He promised that he would take an early opportunity of doing so, but as a devout papist he got into some trouble with the hierarchy on an education question, and had to resign his candidature. Meanwhile the Duke of Connaught, good soldier and good fellow as he is, had to content himself with a new billet invented by the pundits of Pall Mall, and giving such few opportunities of work and professional distinction that he resigned it

after a short time, and then the authorities revenged themselves on him by removal from the post which was not a necessary contingent on the elevation to be a member of the promotion board—a hole-and-corner secret society, which sits in solemn conclave to decide who are, and who are not fit for higher promotion. This recalls those abominable and un-English confidential reports which ruin a man's character behind his back on the evidence of personal spite and unsifted evidence, and giving him no effective chance of being heard, condemn him in the prime of life to seek premature retirement at the expense of the rate-payer.

I have heard many debates in the House about the desirability of linking the naval and military forces more closely and officially together, and Lord Charles Beresford and Sir Charles Dilke have more especially pressed this desirable reform. And now it has been left for our energetic and clear-thinking late War Minister and his brilliant naval colleague to give practical effect to the dreams of others.

Some curious things were done in connection with the South African War. First and foremost the mysterious collapse of the South African Committee, whose prolonged deliberation by the effect of some strange and unexplained influence came to nothing. Then the appointment of society generals, whose incapacity helped to make the general failure, and next the influence of smart ladies, who being insubordinate, and ignorant, and insolent, worried the poor sick Tommies, and defied the authority of the doctors. When Treves and McCormac came back from the war

they were entertained by the Reform Club, and the former in his speech referred to the two plagues, of flies and of women. This was not to be endured by the daughters of Eve, so they commissioned Mr. Burdett Coutts, who had been *Times* correspondent for a brief period, and who had seen very little of the actual state of affairs, to espouse their cause in the House of Commons, and deliver a violent tirade against the Army Medical Department. For some mysterious reason the Government did not see fit to defend the doctors, but asked me to move the adjournment. I came down fully prepared, and made my motion, when up jumped a satellite of Burdett Coutts and gave notice of a blocking motion, and I was knocked out of time. A cowardly bit of work, all done, of course, in the interest of the Government, who could not face the exposure which I was ready to make of their total want of preparation for the sick, but who found it convenient to make the poor doctors, not for the first time, the scapegoats for their egregious obstinacy and ignorance. If I had time and space I could say a great deal more on this tempting subject, for it was one which touched me deeply as an old member of the Army Medical Department, who had their honour and reputation deeply at heart.

The military opinions held by the War Office have always been against progress, and the result is that in every big war there is shameful but shameless incapacity, miscalculation, obstruction, and waste of national money and national credit. Unhappily, we had no Russells or Archibald Forbes to tell us what went on in the Peninsula Campaign, but the Duke of Wellington

would stand no nonsense, and his iron hand came down heavily on every abuse. He believed with Napoleon that an army marched on its stomach, and when a contractor came to him with the complaint that one of the generals said he would hang him if some particular thing were not done, his only consolation was in being told "You had better be careful, for if Picton said he'd do that, he'll do it." In the Crimea an old official man who had spent many years as adjutant-general at the War Office, and looked as though he had subsisted on ramrods and red tape, was sent out in command of a brigade and fell foul of an able and devoted medical officer, Dr. Lawson, for protesting against the high tight stocks then in vogue, and which were supported by the general because they made the men look smart and their faces red. The result of this was that the awful doom, then and perhaps now in vogue at Pall Mall, was pronounced upon him, and a black mark was placed against his name. This means that the victim was placed in official obscurity, like the oubliettes of the Bastille, that promotion flowed over his head, and when his allotted period of service was over, he slipt on to half-pay unwept, unhonoured, and unsought. In addition to this a singularly mean attempt was made to hold him responsible for the shocking muddle at Balaclava, and thus help to shelter the real culprit, who was whitewashed by a picked board convened to let him off. But the tough old Scotsman really gained the day, for my old friend Myers, in his very able Alexander prize essay, proved to a demonstration by means of all the modern instruments of precision how tight enclosure

of the neck and chest was an active cause in promoting the heart and aorta troubles, which used to be far too common in the army. So the martyr had his reward, and when he retired into private life, unrewarded or decorated, he at once took a leading part in helping the cause of sanitary reform and epidemiological progress.

The abolition of purchase was so vehemently opposed by the military party, both in and outside the House, and their obstruction was so effectual, that Gladstone was obliged to invoke the Royal prerogative to get it passed into law. And now, as so often happens, those who denounced it most strenuously are the first to admit the enormous benefits that were thus conferred on the prestige and efficiency of the service. In connection with purchase, it is perhaps not generally known, and even when it is, difficult to believe, that when an officer is killed in action or dies whilst serving, that his purchase money reverts to the State. So that not only does he lay down his life for his country, but has his pocket picked as well. This I know to be a fact, because it was part of my official duty when serving with the Guards to visit sick officers and certify that they were not likely to die before a certain period, six months, so far as I can remember, for otherwise their application to retire could not be entertained.

Another singularly shabby regulation of the military authorities is in connection with horse-keep. When I served with the R.A. we were not allowed to hunt our chargers, but now the permission is given, on condition that the officer pays a yearly £10 insurance money. But if the horse is lamed and sold at a loss, the unfor-

fortunate owner gets no benefit from the money he has paid, but which is confiscated by the State. And yet the authorities wonder at the difficulty in getting officers.

Readers of Wellington's life will remember the difficulties put in his way by the Horse Guards, headed by the incompetent Duke of Kent, when he wished to select his own staff previous to going on a campaign. And we all remember the outcry about the Wolseley ring. It seems natural that commanders-in-chief should wish to be surrounded by men with whom they have served, and whose capabilities have been proved in action, and that is probably the reason why that great soldier, as C.-B. called him, was invariably successful in everything that he undertook.

From these general strictures on our military administration I wish to exempt the recent War Minister, Lord Haldane, whose clear, courageous brain and patient industry gradually unravelled the complicated problems that confronted him, and who did his best to avoid the horrors of conscription by giving us a citizen army well equipped and reported on in warm terms by all who have had any practical experience of their working. I am amused at the way in which candidates on platforms lay the flattering unction to their souls that compulsory service is something different from conscription, which no one dares to mention publicly, and whose effect on the French people has been most ably described by Miss Betham-Edwards, and the supposed benefits of which have been unanswerably exposed by the great authority of Sir Ian Hamilton. Lord Palmerston years

ago expressed a very decided opinion, writing to a friend on this subject, that things are invariably better done by various influential people voluntarily than by compulsion. To my thinking they are incurring a very grave responsibility who directly and indirectly throw cold water on a movement which has in it the germs of the construction of a useful corps, animated by the finest patriotism and sufficiently strong to guard our shores if by any unhappy accident we should lose the command of the seas.

To make anything approaching a complete list of the calumnies I remember would require a volume to itself. There can be no indiscretion now in reminding my readers of two specially bad ones about the King, which have been refuted on official authority.

Gladstone, from his position and high character, was specially vulnerable to this singularly mean development of party spite. Perhaps injudiciously, considering the tone and temper of his opponents, he used to speak to fallen women on the street, and all kind of discreditable inferences were drawn. To test these a friend of mine addressed one of these unfortunates from whom the G.O.M. had just parted. "What did he say to you?" he asked. "Oh, the good old man," was the reply, "he has just been urging me to give up my present life, and offering me his help."

The next false accusation was the reported apology to Austria, which was said to be wrung from him by *force majeure*. As all students of Morley's monumental life are, or should be, aware, what happened was

this. It was brought to his notice that some words employed by him in the Midlothian campaign had made an unfavourable impression on that friendly country. So he made a voluntary expression of regret that he had used expressions which might be deemed of a painful or wounding character, adding that when they were uttered he was in a position of "greater freedom and less responsibility."

Then comes the "Perish India" episode, which is so firmly fixed in the sloppy minds of ordinary society people that it seems almost hopeless to go on contradicting it. The Prime Minister, as he was then, was accused of making this disparaging reference to the greatest of our dependencies, and as I was present at the meeting when the words were supposed to be uttered, I can give a flat contradiction. I am not really quite sure whether he was there; but if he was he never used the words with which he was saddled. They were uttered in my hearing by Mr. Freeman, who, as well as I can remember, said "Perish India, rather than we should deviate by one hair's-breadth from what is right and just." I have elsewhere referred to the wicked, cruel and mendacious calumny which represented him as in fits of laughter at the theatre whilst the heroic Gordon lay dead at Khartoum. The fact being that although he was in a state of deep anxiety, the fatal news did not reach him till next morning. After a most careful perusal of all the evidence in this sad case, I have come to the conclusion that the old man's sole responsibility in the matter was being practically forced by public opinion and Cabinet pressure to employ a

man who saw himself as others see him, as laid down in his own letter to Sir William Butler : " Although I may express myself in a queer way, if I were in authority, I would never employ myself. Unstable as water thou shalt not excel, and I don't want to excel."

John Bright who, like Chamberlain, was transferred from his original pedestal of hatred and distrust to become the idol of his former political opponents, was the special target for slings and arrows in the old days. I remember the time when a clever Tory barrister, at that time Solicitor-General, circulated, if he did not invent, stories about harsh and oppressive treatment of his employees. These were easily disproved, his assailant lost his seat and his berth, and finally had to take refuge in a judicial position abroad.

Rumours were so rife about Churchill having broken his parole when a prisoner in South Africa, that I wrote and asked him for material with which to contradict them. And he replied thanking me for the information, and authorising me to send him the names and addresses of those who spread this calumny, so that he could get from them as substantial damages as the law courts have already awarded him against some influential newspapers.

All kinds of unfounded rumours flit harmlessly across the tough hide of the Prime Minister, and I was sitting at dinner one evening in a Riviera hotel, when a retired colonel, bursting with self-importance, came up to our table at which were some good Liberals, and announced that he had just received a telegram from home reporting that Lloyd George had resigned his place in the

Government on account of a divorce suit brought against him by his wife. I mildly ventured to express my incredulity, but he would hear no contradiction, and even next day, when the "ordinary sources of information" published an emphatic denial in open court, he continued both to believe and to circulate the report which had carried conviction to his singularly unbalanced mind.

Parnell and the Pigott case are still fresh in our minds; and C.-B. felt deeply the imputation on his personal honour involved in the refusal of his opponents to believe his statement based on the assurances of the adjutant-general that we had enough cordite for our military needs.

Lord Advocate Ure has suffered as severely as any one from gross misrepresentations coming most unexpectedly from a quarter hitherto distinguished for high-bred courtesy and gentleman-like feeling. But if a man ostentatiously proclaims his detachment from the evidence daily furnished him by the press, he must expect to be sometimes convicted of terminological inexactitudes.

What my friend was accused of saying was that the Tories when they returned to power would refuse to pay the old age pensions. What he *did* say was that under Tariff Reform there would be no money to do it with, for this was the source from which the necessary millions were to come. This special means of extracting revenue could only come from one source, manufactured goods, for even the most ardent protectionist would not dare to tax the people's food or raw materials.

This would not produce more than three and a half millions at most, and even this could not be touched for two or three years, owing to the dislocation of fiscal arrangements caused by the change. This is a very different thing, as "Ananias Ure," as he is freely called by "lewd fellows of the baser sort," both in and out of the press, had no difficulty in showing to the House of Commons, when he made a speech allowed by friend and foe alike to be one of the finest of this generation.

What a wide field we have in unfulfilled prophecies. I can only nibble at the edges, for space is comparatively limited and one must not draw too heavy drafts on the kind attention of readers. But a few instances are of interest. Perhaps the best were the anticipations of disaster from railways. I do not mean the famous story of George Stephenson and the Coo. But in the early days more calamities were foretold over the iron horse than have thus far befallen the ill-starred flying machines which, in spite of their present heavy toll of brave dead, will eventually be as useful and as general as motor-cars.

Free Trade was to ruin agriculture, and the Ground Game Act was to abolish four-footed sport; but we hear of thousands of rabbits being bagged at Mr. Price's famous Rhilwas shoot in Wales, and it is quite common to count from forty to eighty hares at the close of his day in the covers.

The admission of Bradlaugh to the House of Commons was to have a fatal effect on religion, the abolition of purchase was to do serious damage, and an unlash-

army was to degenerate into an undisciplined rabble. But I think all will admit the enthusiastic efforts at efficiency of our land forces, and the superior class of men who can now be induced to take the King's shilling. Lord Salisbury said that local self-government for Ireland would be much more dangerous than Home Rule, but it has worked smoothly, and without a trace of corruption or oppression, and the death duties, which the Tories promised to repeal, but which were said by their own Chancellor to be essential to the financial prosperity of the country, have not worked the havoc among the propertied classes that was predicted. We were told by the Duke of Devonshire that when they came into play Chatsworth would be shut up, but so far, things go on much as usual, and "no one is a penny the worse."

We all remember the dismal groans and wails, and the prediction of ruin to religion and the familiar no popery cry, so dear to Irish bigots, that were to follow the disestablishment of the Irish Church. But it is pleasanter to recall the wise and generous words in which the then Primate told us how largely his own denomination had gained in every way by being severed from the State.

Terrible results were to follow the granting of self-government to South Africa, but even the most ardent opponents of the policy all admit its success, and we might fill page after page with instances of the many times in which red ruin and disaster were to follow something or another, and the world to come to an end before its time—all bearing out the truth of the old saying,

that "you can't argue with a prophet, you can only disbelieve him."

Looking backwards through the smoked glass of mental detachment at the blinding brilliancy of the Grand Old Man, one begins to see spots on the sun. In other words, and to put the case more clearly, I am not quite sure that Home Rule as then introduced, was not a mistake. I admit that the thing was a necessity, and that it had to come, but I mean that the method of its appearance on the scene was untactful and premature. As I have elsewhere said, and as is clearly brought out in Lord Morley's monumental book, and admitted by Gladstone's leading opponents, the idea had long been simmering in his mind, and had only come apparently to the boil all of a sudden. Where the mistake was made, in my humble judgment, was in not taking Bright and Chamberlain earlier into confidence, in planning at first the exclusion of the Irish members, and a financial scheme which could not have met with approval. On the first point Gladstone promised concessions and explanations; but although I heard his Foreign Office speech, after what he said in the House, I came away more fogged than ever, and then came the split, fatal, irrevocable, unmendable, going down, deep down to and through social life, and affecting the ordinary hospitalities, and turning friends into foes, even among relations, as I knew to my cost. Lord Spencer, the finest type of our nobility, complained that when things were at their hottest, he did not get one invitation where he formerly got twenty, and if

that was the case with a man of his high position, what must it have been to others. He never wavered in the faith, nor did W. E. Forster, who was pursued by assassins up to the boat by which he happily did not sail from Dublin—contrasting most favourably with Lord Hartington, as he then was, a great Irish landlord, and a man of a well-balanced mind, who let personal consideration, perhaps not unnaturally in his case, sway what, I think, must have been his better judgment.

I have already given my reasons why I think our interference with the opium traffic wrong. We are already getting into trouble with India about it, and the question is, who must pay the bill? The over-taxed ryots or the English people, who when they hear that they must put their hands into their pockets to please Mr. Alexander and Co., will not bless this crank-made agitation. Then another stupid thing, although I am ashamed to say I was privy to it, concerned vaccination, and that arch humbug, the conscientious objector. This leaflet-fed ignoramus has been allowed to plant fear of infection, and risk the disfigurement and even the lives of his defenceless children, to gratify his meanness and ignorant folly. When the question came before the House my own inclination was to oppose, but Sir Walter Foster was then at the Local Government Board, and with the consent of Sir William Priestley, Lord Lister and myself, it was thought well to throw a sop to the cranks by way of compromise. But the thing has worked badly on the English side of the border, and if I had been in the House, I hope I should have had the pluck to vote against its extension to

Scotland, where it was not wanted, and where vaccination had been carried on in a scientific and acceptable way.

The eight-hours' day for miners has been the failure that was predicted for it by Burt and Fenwick and Mabon and D. A. Thomas, and other experienced people, who said it would raise the price of coal, give rise to future trouble, and interfere with the weekly holiday enjoyed under the old system.

The Trades Disputes Act is an admitted blunder, and if we can shake ourselves clear of the almost superstitious reverence for and dread of the working man, the sooner it comes out of the statute book the better. For under its comfortable cloak of peaceful picketing things are done which make us wonder whether we still are a free country, and cast our memory back to those dark old days when Broadhead and his confederates staggered humanity by crimes committed under trades union influence in Sheffield. And I fear that we are laying up for ourselves failure and trouble by the legalisation of the principle of a minimum wage; already the trades unions, who find it so hard to adhere to an honourable agreement, are avowing their intention of making it the stepping stone to further agitation in a large variety of inconvenient directions. Finally, I am by no means sweet on land valuation. The necessity was based on an accusation which I deny and resent, that landlords were under-assessing themselves for revenue purposes, and it is a real case of *parturiunt montes*, for after much groaning and upheaving and expense, a miserable little mouse in the way of result has crept out. I have no doubt the well-paid officials are competent men,

although the best authorities are not very keen about a job which compels them to give up everything else for a not very fat salary, an uncertain tenure, and no pension; and further than that I deny the competence of a man who knows agricultural conditions in one county to transfer his faculties on short notice to another; and I believe that the work will be slipshod, hurried and unsatisfactory, and its extension to Scotland is quite unnecessary, where we have had for years a valuation roll annually produced under official authority, and giving exactly the needed particulars. And I should like to ask any of these professional gentlemen how they are going to define "site value." What is the value of this, or indeed of any commodity except what it will bring in the open market, and how you can assess the value of agricultural land and the buildings on it separately passes my comprehension.

One of our biggest blunders I am quite certain was the payment of members, yielding to some kind of pressure difficult to be understood by the multitude, but strongly suspected by those in the know, who sniff the gale tainted by the familiar rodent. My own theory is that the concession, if we call it such, was in the nature of a compromise to prevent pressure being put by the Labourists to repeal the altogether righteous Osborne judgment, which saved the working man from having to contribute his hard-earned contribution to pay the political expenses of socialist political candidates, whom they dislike and distrust. But whatever the reason may be I have no doubt of the result. We can ill spare the money to pay the salaries which no one

wants and some will not take, and the mother of Parliaments will be lowered to the level of the American Senate and other paid bodies, and the Liberal party will be seriously damaged by the avowed intention of the professional advocates of labour to run one of their own class at every election, and thus open a tempting split through which the Tory will slip through.

Another thing which certainly ought to be done is to remove the, to my mind, unsatisfactory anomaly which allows clergymen, county gentlemen, retired officers and others of varied and too often minus judicial faculty to sit on benches and play at administering the law. The frequent perversions of justice and harsh and cruel sentences given by these in other walks of life worthy people, are recorded from time to time in the newspapers, and pilloried from week to week in *Truth*. The quarter sessions and other quasi-legal tribunals are only saved, and not always so, from disaster by a competent chairman and a paid clerk, and I am happy to say that in Scotland, which I regard as a really civilised country, this class of business is conducted by sheriffs who combine the jurisdiction of stipendiaries and county court judges, and are paid about half their salary. I, although a J.P. of many years' standing, have never myself been called upon to do more than witness a signature or sit on a licensing court, and I believe my powers end there, and if the great unpaid do their work so efficiently, why waste public money on judges of the High Court, who sit in Olympian state on benches at the Temple and elsewhere, and draw handsome salaries for doing a very moderate amount of work. But in spite of occasional

sneers and criticism, they are able men and command public confidence.

Would it not be possible to remove the absurd difference between the privileges of the Irish and the Scotch peerage? A Lord X. hailing from the distressful country if he is not elected as a representative peer can sit in the Commons, but the unhappy dweller north of the Tweed, if he is not selected by that close Tory corporation, the representative peers, must wait outside the gate disconsolate until, like Lord Reay, he is called inside by an English qualification. And remember that the berth is not permanent, but that you are removable, subject to re-election, as poor Lord Torphichen found to his cost, when he voted for the Budget.

I should like to abolish the dramatic censor. When we read of the extraordinary mistakes made by publishers' readers, we may well marvel at the audacious idea that one or at the most two human minds can form a correct estimate of hundreds of plays flung at them year after year. I say nothing against the capacity or integrity of these gentlemen, but puritanism, or the reverse, or a variety of reasons, personal or otherwise, inherent in human nature, must combine occasionally to warp the judgment even of the most level head. And surely the *reductio ad absurdum* was reached when *Samson and Delilah* was banned, and only allowed to be seen on the stage, which it has adorned since, by regal authority, so the story goes. In my humble judgment the only real tribunal for the trial of merit or impropriety is the British public, the *vox populi, vox Dei*, who are seldom wrong.

Another improvement in our procedure would be to abolish the necessity for seeking re-election on appointment to the Government. It is a heavy tax on a minister to have to use his first year's salary in a contest carried on at the time most inconvenient to himself, and when his services are required by the State. Emboldened by recent successes, the old unwritten law, by which recently appointed office holders were allowed to be returned unopposed, has been broken, and several ministers have lost their seats. I believe that in former days, when corruption was ripe, there was some good reason for this custom, but now there is none, and the sooner it is swept away the better for our reputation for common-sense.

A much needed reform is the removal of the Bishops from the House of Lords. It is one of the anomalies of our mysterious constitution that whereas a placed minister of the Established Church cannot plant himself on the green benches, the lawn sleeves can flutter on the red, and a Nonconformist can go where he pleases and do what he likes. If these spiritual peers had shown themselves in favour of progress and reform, instead of almost invariably taking a narrow Tory line, I might excuse their presence, but I have a heavier indictment to make against them. When the Anti-Pigeon Shooting Bill, which detailed horrible and uncontradicted cruelties done to the innocent birds at Monte Carlo was brought in, the Bishops helped to ensure its defeat in the Upper House, and Sydney Smith tells us how they worked to prevent the abolition of the boy chimney-sweeps and the abomination of the old system. The

fiery Willis led the assault on them in the House of Commons, and obtained a good division, and it was on this occasion that the universally respected Home Secretary Cross made his solitary deviation from the paths of strict moderation by emulating not wisely but too well the weathercock, and paying the penalty of those who rashly and suddenly change their atmospheric environment under such circumstances. His frequent but unsuccessful attempts to quote from Mr. Gladstone were capped by his indignant discovery that he heard a smile, a lamentable circumstance which caused the worthy John Talbot to express his regret that this should have happened "on such a solemn occasion, too." But the Bishops were not seriously shaken, and remain to give a benignant episcopal sanction to the "other place."

I remember a curious debate which seemed to me to savour of crankism, as to whether a statue to the Prince Imperial should be erected in Westminster Abbey, and all kinds of terrible consequences were freely predicted. Briggs, a jolly, stout kind of fellow, who obtained for this night only a notoriety which was never repeated, denounced the proposal in unmeasured terms; but I could never see why a fine young fellow, connected with a friendly nation, and who died fighting for us, should not find a place in our national mausoleum. Much amusement was caused by Briggs calling out in his rotund manner, "To whom should we put up statues?" and by the answering shouts, "Briggs! Briggs!"

Curious instances of past faddism were the violent opposition to the assumption by the Queen of the title

of Empress of India (this might be added to our list of unfulfilled prophecies, for it has pleased our oriental dependencies, and no one has been a ha'porth the worse); and the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. This was bitterly denounced at the time, but the result has falsified all predictions, and the investment has been a magnificent one, and not only brings in copious dividends, but gives us a preponderating influence in the affairs of the Company, which might be of immense service in the case of international complication.

I am not sure that the general post, the shuffling of the cards that takes place when a ministry is constructed or reconstructed, is good for the public service. Gladstone's theory was that every minister should, as far as possible, serve successively in each department, so that he can intelligently discuss the affairs of them all in the Cabinet. So that when a man showed special aptitude for the work of the Admiralty, he should next go to the Home Office, and the Local Government Board should be a stepping-stone to the War Office. The result of this plan must be to place the minister surely under the thumb of the permanent officials, who, like the brook, "go on for ever," and are the sole medium of instruction for the chief who fitfully flits through the severely furnished rooms which are his temporary official home—and red tape and obstruction are apt to get the upper hand.

Happily these hard-worked and not too well-paid and comparatively obscure people are invariably men of the highest character and efficiency, who could perfectly well act as the mouthpieces of their departments if they

got the chance. But concealed behind the personality of ministers, they ply them with information, keep the machinery of their offices in good working order, and ably help to maintain the tone of high-minded distinction and honour, which enable our public departments to command the confidence of the country.

But how about the things we ought to do? Some of them have already been indicated in the preceding pages, and it may seem presumptuous in me to dictate to the party of which I am still an attached if occasionally a critical member. I think we will all agree in the wisdom of Sir Edward Clarke's suggestion that bills dropped at the end of one session should be resumed in the next at the point when obstruction or the necessities of time compelled them to be suspended. Next I like Sir George Trevelyan's plan for ending the session much earlier and resuming soon after Christmas, also for doing something to check the indiscriminate slaughter of bills by simply removing the hat, and prevent the foolish practice by which any one by giving notice of a motion to the same effect can stop that most useful engine for letting off steam or even shoving the parliamentary machine, motions for adjournment. My old friend Major Rasch's arguments for shortening speeches are quite unanswerable. Abolishing entirely the debate on the Address, and making it compulsory to introduce a bill by the same process as it is now killed by, namely, removing the hat, thus saving time and reserving debate for the second reading, when it is practical instead of merely academic. Cutting down election expenses by letting the returning officers'

machinery in the polling booths be worked by responsible locals, like registrars and schoolmasters, who are quite as responsible and reliable as the highly-paid lawyers who now swell the candidate's bill. Putting a stop to any use whatever of wheeled conveyances which give an unjust preference to the rich over the poor. Shortening the qualifying period of residence for a vote, and let the elector take his qualification from one district to another and use it there. The present plan presses hardly on fishermen and others, who are often compelled to be absent from home during a contest. Making illegal, as is now often voluntarily done, the using of posters, which are often exaggerated and even detrimental. What must surely have given the *coup de grâce*, if such were needed in these enlightened days, to the last of the fancy franchises, would be the performance of two of the members of this select guild. They are supposed to be men of high intellectual culture, gentle and refined, standing apart from the rough and tumble of acute party politics, and unwilling to entrust their delicate fibre to the rude contact of the contested election. But then we see Lord Hugh Cecil, whose chances of entering Parliament through any open front gate were admittedly of the slenderest, thus shoved in by the back door, and then tarnishing the prestige of Parliament by the most discreditable scene of modern times, when with hysterical vehemence, and eyes starting half out of his head, and hoarse cries of "Divide," he successfully prevented the Prime Minister from making a statement of vital importance. And his great leader sitting alongside had not the pluck to interfere

with the performance of this highly-finished product of the sweetness and light of one of our great universities. An attempt was made to show this was a needed reprisal, and that the Liberal party once did the same thing to Lyttelton during a colonial debate. But the cases do not run on all fours, and even if they did, two blacks do not make a white, and I know that the incident to which I refer was regretted afterwards by those who brought it about. The fact is that the Gentlemen Tory party so-called had made up what they are pleased to call their minds to insult C.-B. on every possible occasion by walking out of the House when he rose to speak, worrying him with rude interruption and contemptuous indifference. On one occasion, as Leader of the House, he had made an important statement, and the usual etiquette was that the Leader of the Opposition should reply. But Mr. Alfred Lyttelton was put up, and this annoyed the enthusiastic supporters of that great and good man, and led to the demonstration to which I have referred.

The other instance is when the Dublin University in active conspiracy with a nobleman, more remarkable for the breadth of his acres than the depths of his brains, formed the plan of campaign to prevent free speech, that finest principle of our constitution, to be exercised in Belfast; and furthermore announced his intention if Home Rule ever became the law of the land to start a rival Government against that which is seated on the throne. May I remind Sir Edward Carson that the roll of Irish history contains the lives of those who laid them down for doing what he says he intends to do.

But I don't think that any of us take him and his colleagues very seriously, for they talk with plenty of bluster on their lips, and their tongue between their cheeks, and the last ditch will not be overcrowded by the prostrate forms of those who wish to do martyrdom for their perishing causes.

One great and I think admitted mistake was the abolition of the London School Board, and placing the work on the shoulders of the already overlaid County Council. This arrangement has not worked well, and things go far better in Scotland, where the old system prevails and gives satisfaction.

The operations of cranks and faddists find their most congenial hunting-ground in anything connected with the liquor traffic. Foreigners and visitors from over the border are rather surprised to find that in Scotland no intoxicant—I think that is the correct phrase—can be procured on Sunday, and that when on holiday, and walking wearily along after your morning service, you cannot refresh exhausted nature with a nip of whisky or a glass of beer, unless you can compound with your conscience, and become for the nonce a *bona fide*. Under these circumstances it is but poor consolation to be told that this drastic legislation has reformed the habits of my fellow countrymen, as proved by statistics—which are proverbially elastic. But I have a shrewd suspicion that being thus debarred from their habitual stimulant, when they need it most, they simply lay in their supplies the night before, and soak quietly at home. And in spite of the efforts of the well-meaning

teetotal people, the consumption of liquor, as shown by the revenue returns, mounts up year by year.

Another curious arrangement is that in Scotland, at least, you cannot be served with liquor in any hotel where you are staying after (I think) 10.30 p.m., and on one occasion when coming back to my hostelry about eleven, I found the door bolted and barred, and I had to remain outside in a wet night until repeated tugging at the bell persuaded the sleepy porter to let me in.

When you go into certain clubs in Scotland you have to enter in a book the name of any guest who gets a drink; and some day, I suppose, we shall have to furnish the further particulars of what the quality of the liquor was, and how much was consumed a head. A proposal was made, and very nearly passed by the House of Commons, that a policeman in plain clothes should be allowed to enter any club house to see how things are going, and to report accordingly. Soon the Englishman's house, his castle, will not be safe from the prying of these inquisitive cranks. Under the new legislation for the suppression of the White Slave Traffic, a policeman is allowed to run you in, not only for any offence that you *have* committed, but for something which his imagination tells him you are *about* to commit. I have the highest respect for our "bobbies," who are a civil, judicious and long-suffering set of men, but it cannot be good for the mental equilibrium of any one to be given such despotic power.

In Scotland, at all events, if you wish to prolong a dinner or other social engagement beyond a certain hour fixed by the civic Dogberries, you must go to them hat

in hand, and ask for leave; and I can imagine nothing more irritating than when you are supping at one of our leading restaurants, the lights are lowered almost to extinction at 12.30, and you have to struggle out in the dark. The defenders of this kind of grandmotherly legislation retort by saying that the public-houses are closed early, and that it does not do to make one law for the rich and another for the poor. I hold an entirely different opinion. The social fabric is built up on this principle, and if those who are below us cannot keep within the lines of moderation, we can, and should get the reward of our sense of decency and self-restraint.

I was rather surprised last year when staying at a leading golfing hotel to find that it was illegal to play cards for money except in a private room. I believe the question has been fought out in the law courts, whether a hotel is really "a public place" within the meaning of the Act, or whether, as common-sense would suggest, it is not *ipso facto* your private residence as long as you remain in occupation. But the notice on the back of a pack of cards which I bought was most peremptory, and I suppose bridge at 3*d.* a hundred is considered gambling. How much better we should get on in the world if our rulers, be they municipal or imperial, were more largely endowed with a sense of proportion!

If I venture to protest against the authoritative moving-on of beggars, I am in good company, for the delightful Charles Lamb, in one of his best-known essays, makes "a complaint of the decay of beggars in the metropolis." Now, of course, it would be much better if we were all sober and honest and virtuous,

plying some useful trade, or, if that were ineffectual, gratefully accepting the workhouse roof to shelter us from the storms of life. But in every rank there are ne'er-do-wells, who from incapacity, or idleness, or that kind of happy-go-lucky casual discursiveness which makes steady application impossible, go to the wall. And when in their miserable, shivering, ragged, half-starved state, they hold out their hands and ask for a little of my superfluity, I find it hard to resist. Worthy, well-fed, warmly-clothed, securely-housed people say that this is contrary to the sound abstract principles of political economy, that we are pauperising these mendicants, encouraging their parasitic importunity—perhaps their imposture—that admirable societies exist for examining their cases and relieving their wants. All this is perfectly true; and sitting beside our comfortable fire, or after our nourishing dinner, these arguments seem to be quite satisfying. But when we see a pale, shivering, half-famished child, with the worn, anxious mother, and the apparently unemployed father, the objective effect of their sufferings, whatever the subjective reality may be, can hardly help touching your heart and your pocket, and your hand instinctively finds its way there. And even if when your back is turned, the recipient of your charity proceeds towards the public-house, I would not grudge the social waif and stray his glass of beer. Some of us, too, enjoy our stimulant, and if the cheering glass casts a ray of sunshine athwart his dreary path, just think that perhaps if it had not been for luck, opportunity and the accident of birth, we might have been in the same position. And

it is surely good for our moral nature to administer "the greatest of these, charity," even if it is not always rightly dispensed, and if we are taken in, listen to Charles Lamb—

"Shut not thy purse-strings always against painted distress—act a charity sometimes. When a poor creature (outwardly and visibly such) comes before thee, do not stay to inquire whether the 'seven small children,' in whose name he implores thy assistance, have a veritable existence. Rake not into the hovels of unwelcome truth to save a halfpenny. It is good to believe him. If he be not all that he pretendeth, give, and under the personable father of a family, think, if thou pleasest, that thou hast relieved an indigent bachelor. When they come with their counterfeit looks and mumping tones, think them players. You pay your money to see a comedian feign these things, which, concerning these poor people, thou canst not certainly tell whether they are feigned or not."

It has always seemed to me a bit of pedantic tyranny to prohibit raffles at bazaars. It was a cheap, easy and popular way of making money, and to call it gambling is a mere misuse of terms. Legal opinion has been taken, and judicial authority has pronounced against the practice; but in my humble opinion common-sense points all the other way.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMPLEAT LOAFER AND THE INVALUABLE HOBBY

WE meet with specimens of this class in every rank of life, and the Celtic races and the Italians and the unemployed during strikes are successful, if not favourable, practitioners of the art. But in what I may call our own rank of life, the most highly finished product of civilisation in this direction is like the poet, born, not made. The younger son of an Irish county gentleman, pleasant, easy-going, with a good heart and an unimpaired digestion, and just enough money to keep the wolf from howling too loudly at the door, as narrated in *The Irish R.M.* and other novels, comes as near that kind of perfection as we can desire. I don't know that I can go much further than this in the way of description, and it is really unnecessary, for the men's clubs, and ball-rooms, and country houses, and other places frequented by the genteel unemployed, will provide perfect types of the class which no doubt has its social uses, even if its place in the general scheme of existence would be filled without any dislocation of the gaiety of nations. But I have come deliberately to the conclusion that complete success in this line is probably a hereditary gift. Study, perseverance and opportunity can do a good deal; but the real faculties are inherited, and the art of slipping easily along life's stream without regrets

for yesterday, cares for to-day, or apprehension for to-morrow depends on a combination of qualities which could only be done justice to by some writer of Thackeray's calibre and observant powers. And as yet—jocosely speaking—for I do not know what may happen when I have written some more books, my literary faculty does not reach up to that supreme level.

It is rather interesting to study the varieties of the loafer class. First, we have the pecunious, who loves to entertain his friends and to help them. Next come the impecunious, the hard-up chronics, who prowls about in search of a tip, straight or otherwise, many of them broken down from former prosperous days, like poor little Nugit of the *Book of Snobs*. Perhaps the worst of the tribe are the irresponsible idlers, so difficult to shake off when they once get a grip, and who spend most of their time in wasting that of others, who call on busy people, and ramble feebly on from subject to subject, without a real idea or bit of useful knowledge, and who have sometimes to be pretty rudely treated before they can be got rid of. But luckily they are usually thick-skinned and never see nor feel a snub, and they belong to that most obnoxious variety of the mammalia known as bores.

Far from loafing is the possession of a good wholesome hobby-horse, with which you may have a healthful scamper now and then, far from the scenes and complications of "the daily round, and common task." So don your overcoat and migrate slowly round the old bookshops, and the picture galleries, not forgetting Christie's, a good course of which will teach you more

than Ruskin ever knew, and after lunch call on your friends and perhaps hear some music, with a cup of tea thrown in, and when you have dined well or ill, according to the state of your purse, or your stomach, or the hospitality of your friends, you are ready for the theatre or the opera, or a quiet read at home, if happily you have acquired a taste for books—and other things will crop up; you may have land to administer, and if you are good-natured and can string a certain number of sentences plausibly together, you will get into request on your friends' platforms, or as the animated latch-key which opens better things, of which the doors have already been flung open—and in the end you will almost succeed in persuading yourself how wise you were to retire from parliamentary life.

Some people find refreshment in foreign travel, and there can be no doubt about the tonic influence of a total change of scene and air and food and language. But there are drawbacks. First and foremost, the Channel, and the profound and inexplicable misery of the *mal de mer*. Then the Douane, that antiquated and worrying survival of the unfittest of a sort of veiled protection, and which is an effectual deterrent to timid folk. Next, the tipping system, when even the most lavish of tourists are worried to see the serried ranks of hirelings lining the hall as he timidly steps out to his bus, all striving to catch his eye, like dogs opening their mouths for the expected bit. And then—and worst of all—the modern system of separate tables, which have replaced the old sociable table d'hôte, and where a lone bachelor will stew in his own solitary juice during dreary weeks; a

family party fleeing to escape domestic boredom find themselves reduced abroad to the same monotonous domestic circle, which they had hoped to escape by coming away from home. The best kind of holiday trip can be carried out of the Williamsons' fascinating books, which always fill me with intense desire to visit the places they describe—and in succession I have made up my mind to explore under their auspices, Holland, Châteauland and Avignon and its surroundings, breathing the romance of the troubadours and their picturesque days. And I hope to live long enough to enjoy this unfulfilled ambition.

Another drawback to foreign parts is the "cold and calculated insolence" in France and Germany—at all events, of their officials. In these bureaucratic lands persons clad in a little authority invariably regard the ordinary public who ask their help or appeal for information as natural enemies, and treat them accordingly. For perfect types of this class commend me to the post office at Mentone and the Casino at Monte Carlo, where after admitting the most dirty and disreputable crowd I have ever come across to the rooms, they submit a fairly respectable-looking person like myself to an amount of searching cross-examination, only excusable on the assumption that he is an anarchist in disguise. And when at last you are allowed to enter the sacred chamber of Rouge et Noir and chance by mistake to keep your hat on your head, the tone of overbearing and ill-bred authority with which your oversight is pointed out, is enough to make your blood boil, if such a physiological process were possible.

Travelling by rail in France, too, is made difficult and uncomfortable by the employees on the line, who give you information grudgingly, and treat you generally as a negligible quantity, unless the hand is seen to steal casually in the direction of the breeches pocket, and considering this official attitude, the almost invariable unpunctuality of arrival and other drawbacks, too well known, but not appreciated, it has always filled me with amazement to find that some of the most influential of our rulers regard the nationalisation of the railways to be worth even a moment's consideration.

It is not good to have only one string to your bow, for suppose it breaks or slackens, you may find yourself stranded without occupation or interest in life. So have a hobby of some kind, and mount and enjoy a good gallop "o'er the downs so free." It is interesting to note the varied forms of amusement or exercise indulged in by our public men. Gladstone was never a keen sportsman, and his enthusiasm for shooting, if it ever really existed, must have been damped by the unfortunate accident which made a gun go off prematurely in the old dangerous muzzle-loading days, and blow away his left forefinger, thus accounting for the little black patch shielding the stump. His favourite occupation was well known to be tree-felling, and he was very particular about the quality of the timber he attacked. For he scorned fir, larch and the like, and directed his axe exclusively to oak, beech and the firmer-grained woods, which offered more resistance to his "brawny arms," in earlier days, "strong as iron bands." But as years went on doctors put a stopper on his activity,

and it was time to do so, for when I saw him planting a tree at Haddon, he perspired profusely, and seemed exhausted even by that comparatively slight exertion.

John Bright was a keen fisherman, and without pretending to extreme science, he was lucky, and seldom came back empty-handed.

My friend Mr. Rupert Potter has completely shattered the illusion encouraged by the enemy that the great tribune was as successful as he was keen and industrious in "grassing" and "creeling" the "silvery beauties."

Ure delights in long walks, and Sir Albert Rollit tells me that if he does not tramp vigorously for eight miles every day, he can't keep off gout. It is popularly believed that Joseph Chamberlain never took any exercise, and that his regrettable breakdown was due to his sedentary habits. I am not in a position to say what he did when away from the House; but when there I have often seen him vigorously pacing the terrace alongside of his brother, with what I venture to call his Birmingham swing. Various other localities have their own special types of locomotion such as the Liverpool lurch, the Boston dip, and St. Andrews roll.

Autumn sessions and the strenuous nature of modern political life have rather crushed out the old-fashioned county gentleman, the knight of the shire, who "kept a great estate" and worked the House of Commons in an easy-going dilettante kind of way. Then few members hunt now-a-days. But I understand that Mr. F. E. Smith is as smart on horseback as on the green benches, and for a heavy-weight, few could beat Henry

Chaplin across country. Some, like Lord Rosebery, affect the Turf, and if you wish some really dramatic talk, get that prince of good fellows, the aforesaid Henry Chaplin, to tell you the story of Hermit's Year.

Various legislators, like the late Sir C. Dilke, took delight in fencing, and he and McKenna and others were expert oarsmen, and loved the river. Literature to some was the crutch rather than the staff, but it is an exacting mistress, and requires more exclusive devotion than the hard-working member can give. Mason found the combination impossible; Sir G. Parker, I fancy, has not done so much work as formerly, for colonial interests take up so much of his time and attention. Miss McCarthy agreed with me in thinking that her father would be much better out of the House, and used to persuade me to urge him to retire; and on one occasion I plucked up courage to remonstrate with the great Lecky for wasting his time in the too-often monotonous and depressing routine of politics.

It is well known that Fawcett, when he recovered from the crushing calamity of his sad accident, made up his mind to live his future life as nearly as possible like his past, so he rowed, rode, and even hunted, skated and fished with great success, often "grassing the silvery beauties" when seeing people failed. Alfred Lyttelton was known as the greatest wicket-keeper of his time, a bat who combined strength with grace to an unusual degree, and a bowler who once got rid of some troublesome Australian whom others had been unable to dislodge from the wicket, though it may be whispered that they were getting themselves out in pre-declaration

days. And not only was he supreme as a tennis-player, but after writing in the *Nineteenth Century* to denounce golf, he ended by becoming a comparative expert at that elusive game.

Sir E. Grey, too, was great in the tennis court, and if rumour speaks truly, he is far happier by the river side plying the dry fly with inimitable skill than when wrestling with the complicated problems of the Foreign Office. Sydney Buxton, I understand, comes a good second with the rod, and is no mean performer in a butt on a northern moor, when the streams of grouse flow thick and fast. Balfour has developed very fine proficiency as a golfer, and I learn that he is beginning to shape out well at lawn tennis, where his good eye and long reach will stand him in good stead. Bonar Law, Churchill, Lloyd George and others are great at driving and putting, and playing the regulation pranks with the little ball and the delusive hole on the links, where they inhale fresh air and blow away the cobwebs of political cares.

CHAPTER IX

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

THE eternal woman's question must be faced, whatever the state of our nerves happens to be, and it is made more difficult by the sharp conflict between logic and sentiment which surrounds it at the present time. No one can deny that in all justice the female population who are carrying out the full obligations, social and pecuniary, of citizenship, and are often intellectually qualified in the highest degree to use it, should have the vote; and the argument was neatly summed up by one of my tenants, who, as a widow, was successfully carrying on a farm. "Here am I," said she, "paying you my rent, and I am debarred from the political privilege granted to my grieve, who is practically my manager, receives my wages." You can't get over this argument, and it is largely a matter of prejudice, which is so often wrong, when we come to consider whether they are really fit to use the vote when they get it. It is, I believe, the fact that they are by no means keen to exercise the franchise, which they already have, for school boards and parish and county councils, nor are they apparently consumed with desire to sit on those bodies, where they could do really useful work. There may be reasons for that, and now comes the really serious part of the matter—the damage done to their cause, as

well as to unoffending tradespeople's windows by militant tactics. These are defended on the ground of analogy; but I venture to say that the facts will not always bear the interpretation placed on them. For instance, the connection between the explosion at Clerkenwell prison and Home Rule has been much strained, for Gladstone always said that it merely drew attention to the subject. The potato famine may have precipitated Free Trade, but Lord John had written his famous letter before that, and Peel was more than half convinced, and if the Peterloo massacre helped on Reform, we must remember that this was enthusiastically desired, and revolution would probably have followed its denial. The weak point of the suffrage movement is that, judging from a considerable experience "on the stump" during the last two elections, there is little general interest taken in the question, and many of the rank and file of the female sex are either lukewarm or hostile. And worst of all, the militant ladies have raised up a numerous and influential band of clever and enthusiastic opponents, who lose no opportunity of preaching their creed. The original president of the hostile association was Lord Cromer, and he explained his views in this terse fashion, and excited violent indignation by doing so: "My reason for refusing the vote to women is that they are women," and there lies a good deal of sound common-sense in this. I quite admit that the militant tactics have brought the question within the range of practical politics; but they should have been allowed to remain there. Everything was going well when I left the House, and the last vote

I gave there was for the cause, which was most ably argued by Sir Charles Maclaren, Emmott and others, and carried by a good majority. Of course, it is quite fair to say that the conduct of a certain number of screaming hysterics should not necessarily prejudice the cause advocated by their more level-headed sisters. This is logical, of course; but the world is largely ruled by sentiment, and the too-numerous opponents of the vote urge what guarantee is there that the more ardent spirits, thousands in number, will not resort to the same tactics when they are allowed to enter the polling booths, and will destroy property and assault ministers and break up meetings, if things don't happen to go as they wish? And if they ever were elected to the House of Commons—and I can hear of not one regulation to prevent them—then Heaven help it, for chaos must inevitably set in, and the chance of doing business would be remote indeed, for reasons which I will give presently, and which are to be observed in any public or private assembly where women have to take a responsible part. It is the fashion to say that all the peculiarities of conduct and demeanour which we notice and sometimes deplore in the other sex, are due to education and training, and that if they had the same opportunity for intellectual development as men they would be their equals. This is not my opinion. I strongly hold that there are constitutional and fundamental physiological and racial distinctions which dig a deep gulf between men and women. To begin with, child-bearing must be taken into account; and there are certain periods culminating in what is called the "change of life," which profoundly

shake the nervous system temporarily, if not permanently, and make it unstable, and what doctors call "movable," and its possessor queer and unreliable and "difficult to do wi'." And I should like to sum up my indictment against women in a few propositions—most regretfully—for no one appreciates their good points more than I do, or have had greater delight in the privilege of knowing specially selected members of the group. Their sense of veracity is on a far lower level than men, and this is, I think, admitted even by themselves. Now by this I don't mean to charge them with deliberate untruthfulness, but only with a certain perverse imaginative twist and desire to magnify their own side of a case in the best possible light. Partly as a result of this is their want of faculty to adhere to an honourable obligation. We all remember the misguided female who darted into the House of Commons after a tacit undertaking to obey the known regulations; and other suffragists who began screaming and interrupting meetings when they had promised to keep quiet, these are only some out of too frequent illustrations of what I mean. Women are essentially insubordinate. They tend to go "agin" all governments, and to rival even the Irish Nationalists in the skill with which they evade rules and regulations; their excuse being that as they have been made by men, they are not incumbent on the other sex who were not consulted at their framing. Women seem inevitably to bring personal considerations into the discussion of larger questions, and appearance, manners, or even dress are apt to sway their opinions one way or another; and Mrs. Jones will not sit on a

committee with that odious Mrs. Smith, or support something quite useful because it is advocated by the obnoxious Mrs. Brown. Women have a very elementary sense of proportion. They are apt to make much of small things, and their inevitable habit of nagging prevents them from knowing when to drop a thing or when it is desirable to push it on to the bitter end. Therefore, compromise, so necessary in public affairs, is distasteful to them. Their excessive loquacity and power of illogical argument, makes it very difficult to do business with them, for they will always have the last word, and "e'en though vanquished, they can argue still." They possess selfish and cynical indifference to the convenience and safety of others, as is shown by the preposterous erection they proudly bear on the top of their heads, and which I have several times seen them flatly refuse to move, for the purpose of allowing those behind to see something of what is going on. In Beyreuth any recalcitrant female is at once taken by the arm and bundled out of the place. And then again, the danger to others from the enormous hat-pins with which the compound mechanism of hair and hat is kept together, and which constitute a standing and sitting menace to the facial integrity of their neighbours. Perhaps under this heading I may include the shabby way in which many of them trade upon the privileges of their sex. When it is necessary to turn them out of any public building, they fall down, bite, scratch, kick and pull the hair and beards of the unfortunate policemen, who are doing their duty with wonderful tact and temper, and if more force is used for their removal than

suits their convenience, loud and piteous are the shrieks of despair and of protest that rend the air. And worst of all, the strain of hysteria runs through their minds when they become excited or over-wrought, and makes them an easy prey to impostors of all kinds. If there is any bit of impossible quackery which the mere man sees through at a glance, *cherchez la femme*, and you will generally find her there or thereabouts. So they are very apt to become the tools of unscrupulous people, with plausible schemes and arguments, and several of the self-dubbed heroines of recent raids excused themselves or were excused by their friends when repentance set in by the way in which they were led astray by the strongly dominating personality of their leaders. I think Mrs. Pankhurst must be an illustration of that. I went to Dunecht last summer where Lady Cowdry lent her beautiful house for a suffrage meeting, and the leader of the party gave a calm, temperate, well-reasoned, well-delivered and most conciliatory speech, which I am sure made converts. Judge then of my amazement to hear that this quiet and reflective-looking elderly lady was, if not actually smashing windows, "egging on" others to do so; and I am inclined to put this down to the dominating influence of Miss Christabel, whose engaging personality and sparkling talent might well interfere with the mental equilibrium of any one of either sex.

Well! what is to be said on the other side? Women have many charms and virtues, which, like the bloom on the peach, are apt to be rubbed off by too violent contact with public affairs. By all means, let them help

intellectual and social movements for the benefit of their sex and of children, and even of men. The old type of womanhood had only one object in life, which was to secure a husband, and then either to become an aggressive home-ruler, or a down-trodden household drudge, little better than an upper servant, struggling perhaps to make both ends meet, and exposed to all the sordid worries of a narrow domesticity, which the man successfully evades. Or perhaps the home may be an ideal one, where husband and wife understand each other, and are mutually helpful, and she is an intelligent companion and appreciative, without entering into too active competition with one whom she has promised to love, honour and *obey*. And if she is sufficiently well off, and things run smoothly, and if her family does not consist of plain girls that can't marry, and worrying ones that want careers on the stage and elsewhere, and erratic boys who decline to work, she is probably quite contented with her lot. But then that lot does not fall to all. There are female as well as male bachelors, as well as those who do not get the chance of maternity, and they are apt to become emotional and high-strung, and inclined to take what I may call a priggish view of their actions—as one of the most militant of the suffragists said when asked why she had thrown a bottle into the carriage of a Cabinet Minister, “I did it for a high moral purpose.” What are you to do with people of that sort? And the *reductio ad absurdum* of their proceedings was surely reached when they attempted to break up a meeting at which a Cabinet Minister for the first time took the chair to advocate their cause.

I am no believer in the wonderful results that are to follow the granting of votes to women. According to some of the more fervid of their orators, a sort of millennium will be brought about, a new heaven and a new earth, and an immediate bettering of social and economic conditions all round. Perhaps it is only the opinion of the mere man when I say that when we are properly instructed we can legislate for women as well as for ourselves quite as well as they can, and I am quite sure that they will lose rather more than they will gain. The insensible influence they now possess, and so successfully use, will evaporate with many of the feminine attributes and nameless charm which they now possess, and which constitute such a potent influence, unseen, unfelt and often unacknowledged, in public affairs. I remember Leatham making a very clever speech against female franchise, and describing the inconveniences that might arise if they got into office in the House. He admitted that it might be an advantage to have a young and blooming First Commissioner of Works, but what would become of some great bill if the Attorney-General eloped with the Solicitor-General, or if public business were brought to a standstill by the accouchement of the Prime Minister?

Perhaps in all this I have taken too pessimistic a view of the situation, and have brought into dark and even lurid prominence the worst features of the complex blend that goes to make up the female character. That may be so, and it is necessary to remind my readers how essential women are and always have been, not only to our very existence, but to much of the charm and sweet-

ness of life. Dr. John Browne always spoke of his wife as the *sine quâ non*, and how should we get on without their sympathy and encouragement and helpfulness in prosperity and adversity, and their possession of the valuable commodity so freely bestowed upon us, and to which the young man's feelings gently turn at spring time? Whether these, by comparison, fragilely constructed beings are really capable of bearing the strain and stress of public affairs remains to be proved, and perhaps I am wrong in not believing that education, expansive influence of responsibility will bring out qualities which lie dormant or only lend themselves to irregular development. This may be so—time alone will show, and I hope I have placed the facts on either side sufficiently plainly before the jury, to enable them to make up their minds for themselves and come to a common-sense conclusion.

CHAPTER X

RUNS THROUGH INDIA AND EGYPT

I SHOULD recommend jaded legislators to follow my example and take a run to and through India. Amiable platitudes of the copybook type have been freely written about the importance of our greatest dependency, and the necessity for M.P.s to go and realise their responsibility on the spot. But they won't get on much "forrader" by doing so. They will merely travel from one big town to another, will enjoy the hospitality of viceroys and governors and commissioners and Joe Sedleys, but will not and cannot get any real insight into the condition of the people, of their aims and aspirations, of what they should get, and what should be withheld from them. The tour must only be regarded as a holiday one, through a country full of historic interest, of overwhelmingly gigantic architecture, of an infinite variety of native races living most mysterious and complicated lives. My whole expenses amounted to £300, and by taking my dear old friend Sir Joseph Fayrer's advice, wearing a flannel belt, never letting the sun beat on my head, and staving off malaria with quinine when visiting a feverish district like Delhi, I never had a day's illness during my three months' trip. And I came away full of admiration for the devoted, able and statesmanlike work done by our hard-worked

officials, and able to appreciate more clearly the splendid record of manhood, tenacity and brilliant military pluck and skill made by the sad yet glorious history of the Mutiny.

I am not going to worry my readers with any tedious description of travel or scenery, natural or artificial, and the name of the Taj will not slip from my pen save to say that it is the one thing in the world, with the exception of old Venice—not the new, with its dirty penny boats—which has never disappointed any one.

But I must not omit to express my grateful memory of much kindness and hospitality I enjoyed from all sorts and conditions of men. Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, who gave me dinners and balls and valuable advice, and, best of all, the opportunity of admiring his handsome and intellectual face, of enjoying his copious and sympathetic talk, and seeing the treasures of Government House. It must have been a proud moment for Lord Curzon when he met his predecessor on the steps of the House, modelled, either by accident or design, on the precise lines of his own ancestral home. And the brilliant Irishman, whose clever and charming wife will live in the affectionate memory of the Indian people, by her persistent and successful efforts for the medical care of their wives, made me familiar with the art treasures of his temporary pleasure house, not the least interesting of which were the clever water-colour drawings he did to illustrate his capital book *Letters from High Latitudes*. He had a real passion for art, and once during an interregnum between Governorships, he went to Paris and studied under an assumed name at

one of the ateliers. His identity was never disclosed, but there was something in his air of distinction which induced his fellow-students to call him "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur." §

Lord Reay, too, was most kind, and invited me to join his tour through Kathiawar, an interesting province of Bombay, inhabited by independent chiefs who vied with one another, not only in the splendour of their entertainments, but in the public-spirited way in which they spent their revenues for the benefit of their subjects. And the Governor's royal progress was signalised by opening hospitals and public buildings of various kinds in admirably appropriate speeches. The magnificence of this splendid strolling quite unfitted one for the humdrum routine of ordinary everyday touring, and it was sad to have to exchange ample marquees provided with all the most refined toilet appliances, banquets where the beaded bubbles winked at you from the rim of the champagne glasses, and did a good deal more than that, with illuminations and fireworks and special trains, and well-horsed carriages when these failed, to travelling as an unnoticed globe-trotter humbly from place to place. The only incident that is specially impressed on my memory was at Ahmedabad, where, after inspecting its gorgeous architecture, I was taken in charge of the Resident, hitherto unknown to me, and given the exuberant hospitality of his comfortable house. In the middle of the night I was wakened by a curious sound as if some animal or animals were turning over the contents of my open portmanteau. Having seen monkeys thickly clustered on the date palms, I suspected a visit

from them, and knowing that they occasionally are vicious as well as mischievous, I lay very still until I summoned up enough courage to clap my hands, when they cleared out, only to be succeeded after a short interval by a fresh invasion, which happily exhausted their curiosity. And next morning my host said, "I hope the monkeys did not disturb you, for they sometimes worry and alarm strangers."

When steaming India-wards I got the "straight tip" to look up the papers on arrival, to find out when the Viceroy was going on his autumn tour, and follow him up. So I first went to Lahore, where I found him receiving all the Punjab chiefs, with the ill-conditioned and insubordinate Maharajah of Cashmir at their head, and next to Hyderabad—Deccan, where he had gone to patch up some differences between the Nizam and his minister. And there I fell on my feet, for I attended a magnificent banquet given by the Nizam, and a charming water picnic on the Mir Alum Tank, and lunched with Salar Jung, who made me try very unsuccessfully to smoke a hookah, and who seemed most appreciative of that rollicking Irishman, Lord William Beresford, who was his table companion.

Not the least interesting of my Indian experiences was the visit I paid to the Rajkumar College at Rajkote, which under the effective control of an old Eton master, Mr. Macnaughten, was run as exactly as possible on the lines of our public schools. Ranji was brought up and learnt his cricket there, and I attended the speech day, when little ruling chiefs and their relatives, blazing in jewels like humming-birds, recited and acted with

spirit and acquired English tradition, which will bear good fruit in the wise and progressive rule of their dominions.

Another trip I also advise, although it is in many ways an expensive one, and living in Cairo is now too much given over to smart folk and their exhausting ways. But Egypt has, of course, many points of interest from the Pyramids downwards, but care is needed, for as Kinglake puts it—

“And near the Pyramids, more wondrous and more awful than all else in the land of Egypt, there sits the lonely Sphinx. Laugh and mock as you will at the worship of stone idols, but mark ye this, ye breaker of images, that in one regard the stone idol bears awful semblance of deity, unchangefulness in the midst of change, the same seeming will and intent for ever and ever inexorable upon ancient dynasties of Ethiopian and Egyptian Kings, upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman conquerors, upon Napoleon dreaming of an Eastern Empire, upon battle and pestilence, upon the ceaseless misery of the Egyptian race, upon keen-eyed travellers, Herodotus yesterday and Warburton to-day—upon all, and more, this unworldly Sphinx has watched and watched like a Providence, with the same earnest eyes, and the sad, tranquil mien. And we, we shall die, and Islam will wither away, and the Englishman, leaning far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of

the Nile, and sit in the seats of the faithful, and still that sleepless rock will lie watching and watching the works of the new busy race, with those same sad, earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphinx."

But the overwhelming grandeur of that big broken-nosed monster, the Sphinx, grips you at once, and holds you. I don't intend to worry my readers with descriptions, more or less tedious, of what I saw and did there, but I wish to pay tributes of respect to the memory, happily sometimes green, at others in the sere, the yellow leaf of too premature death and decay. My good friend Rowsell, high up in official life, lent me a horse, and personally conducted me through the old town, which he knew from end to end. Nubar Pasha and his charming wife entertained me royally; that fine old soldier, Sir F. Stevenson, and Sir Edgar Vincent were kind to an old Guardsman, and it was a great pride to see my former school-fellow, Sir C. Scott-Moncrieff, instated as the real saviour of the country; and last, but not least, I must mention Sir E. Baring, as he was then, the strongest and wisest of Pro-Consuls, whose name is still remembered with respect and admiration, just slightly touched with awe. And I am grateful to him for doing me a good turn. On my arrival in Cairo, I was told by an official whose acquaintance I had made, that if I obtained a presentation to the Khedive I should be invited to a great dinner he was giving to Lord Ripon on his way home from India. Sir Evelyn Baring, leaving all his pressing work, drove me at once to the Palace,

where I paid my respects to the Khedive and received my invitation in due course to a magnificent banquet served in regal style. I found him most affable and intelligent, and greatly to my relief I noticed that he did not smoke, for I was in terror that etiquette might have obliged me to take a cigarette, which as no devotee of Lady Nicotine, might not have agreed with my constitution. I must have made a favourable impression on him in spite of my bad French, for on my next visit a year later, a message was conveyed to me that he had seen me walking in Cairo and wondered why I had not been to see him. Needless to say, I duly presented myself, and had a most cordial reception. He had then learnt to talk good English, and the first thing he said to me was, "Do you know Mr. Cook?" I was obliged to confess that I only knew him as an occasional client. But I could not get away from the subject, and he explained how grateful he was to that great organiser for conducting the Mecca Pilgrimage quickly and decently. I heard with great regret of this monarch's premature and unnecessary death, for he was a good friend to the English, and showed a high example to his people by restricting himself to one wife.

I had the pleasure of assisting at the marriage of Salim Pasha's son, and before the ceremony the bridegroom said to me, "I am most anxious to see my wife"; the custom during the engaged period being to feed the imagination with photos and description, and leave the production of the original till after the completion of the service. The wedding feast was purely oriental; we tore away fragments of lamb with our fingers, and the

host, wishing to do special honour to his principal lady guest, extracted one of the beast's eyes and presented it to her as a special *bonne bouche*.

Going up the Pyramids is difficult, and might be dangerous to weak headed or hearted people. The enormous blocks of stone which compass these gigantic erections are broad and flat, and afford an excellent foothold, but they are just almost beyond the limits of an ordinary leg, so that you must have two attendants, one to tug at your arms almost to dislocating point, and the other to propel you vigorously from the rear, and in this way you reach the top without disaster. But when there, and looking down the vast side of the gigantic pile, you feel your nerve ooze away a bit as you contemplate the return journey. Luckily I had not then heard a lurid story whose accuracy was vouched for by the friend who told me of it. He was coming down in charge of a couple of native guides, when his knowledge of the language enabled him to follow a conspiracy between them to demand a certain exorbitant fee when half-way down, or else to pitch him clean over, and report the disaster as an accident when they got down. So my informant took out his handkerchief, tied his hand to the foot of the man above him, and so reached *terra firma* in safety. He then handed over the ruffians to the authorities, by whom they were suitably punished, and since then all the arrangements are placed in the hands of the village Sheikh, who keeps discipline and prescribes a regulated rate of payment.

We spent our Christmas day in a dreary and unexpected manner. We had gone up in a boat to see the

barrage, that great monument to Scott-Moncrieff's engineering skill, and its flat bottom got stuck on a snag or submerged tree, and all the unremitting and laborious attempts of our boatmen to get us off were unsuccessful. So there we remained all day and all night, with no food and no sleeping arrangements, till morning came and some rising of the tide floated us off. And then, tired and haggard and dishevelled and half-starved, we reached the Hotel du Nil and heard of the liberal hospitable dinner provided at mine host's own expense for the guests under his roof.

I had some interesting talk with Sir E. Baring, now Lord Cromer, about Gordon, and am strongly of opinion that if Stevenson's advice had been taken, and the desert route selected, relief might have reached the beleaguered garrison of Khartoum in time. But it is understood that there was jealousy between him and Wolseley, who, I should have thought, would have known the difficulties of the Nile route. For the river was then low, difficulty was experienced in getting sufficient boats; and, as described in my old friend Sir Charles Wilson's most graphic book, *From Korti to Khartoum*, they had to be dragged painfully and laboriously along masses of nearly dry rocks which formed the bed of the river. And the sad death of poor Stewart, with the argument—I will not say controversy—regarding the choice of his successor, caused the fatal delay. Many and brilliant as have been the exploits of Lord Charles Beresford, none have, I think, exceeded in heroic dash and daring the way in which he steered and repaired his boat under a heavy and destructive fire.

When I thought of Burma my time was running short; the Whips were metaphorically beckoning me back to the House, and if I had not providentially met Sir Roper Lethbridge and arranged a pair with him, I should not have been able to visit that interesting country. It had just been annexed by Lord Randolph Churchill, who always said that this bit of statesmanship would have been the best tribute to his memory, and as there were still difficulties with the "Shan" tribes and the journey was a long one, I consulted Lord Dufferin whether I should go there. "If you can manage a visit to Japan, it is not necessary, but if you can't, undoubtedly make the trip and see a people who are very much like the Japs"—and I never regretted his advice. The voyage on the comfortable boats of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company was most comfortable, and on the middle deck I saw crowds of the native women, their white bismuth-coloured faces sharply contrasted by their blue-black hair and brilliantly-varied clothes of sharply contrasted reds and blues and yellows, which seemed to flash in the sun as vividly as the jewels which so liberally adhered to the most unexpected places. Sir Charles Bernard most kindly put me up in the late Queen's bedroom in the spacious palace, whose golden saddle-back roofs glittered gorgeously in the oriental air. Truly a memorable visit.

Take it all over life is well worth living, and even those to whom it has not brought unmixed blessings and whose lives have not always been laid in pleasant places have no wish to anticipate the inevitable end. The object of this book has been to show what can be

best made out of a political career, and how looking backwards or forwards, or turning the introspective eye towards present conditions, we may lay the flattering unction to our souls that we have not lived in vain. It seems good, therefore, to consider how we can make the best of our physical and mental resources, and not to give any unnecessary encouragement to the persuasions of death to come and have a look at what is going on in the next world.

CHAPTER XI

HOW TO OBTAIN THE TENDENCY TO DEATH

No doubt most of us wish that we could escape from what John Morley calls the "awful law of death," but unhappily it is firmly and immutably fixed and must be obeyed.

The fate of the condemned criminal who shudderingly awaits the dread moment when he will be summoned to the scaffold, seems to be a terrible one, but in our pity for him, we are apt to forget that we are in the same plight. We all have to die some time, and the uncertainty of the when is only a shade, if at all, better than the exact period of time prescribed by the judge—and we are in the position of the victims of the guillotine, who were called away one by one at uncertain intervals to face the swift surgery of the knife, rather than the doomed murderers the horrors of whose last moments have been described with such picturesque vividness by Dickens (*Oliver Twist*) and Victor Hugo (*Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné à mort*).

People have often rebelled against the necessity for quitting this world, and have formed associations in protest. There was once a club formed of *viveurs*, who were determined to remain in existence as long as they pleased, but they crept away one by one, and when the last survivor sat down to his solitary dinner he was

compelled to admit that he had been beaten. Then he, too, followed the others into the silent land, and although the followers of Mrs. Eddy hold and believe that there is no such thing as death, they are sorely put to it when they have to explain the sudden and mysterious disappearance of some of their number from among their ranks. So we must make up our minds to face the grim fact that we are only temporary residents here down below, that our lease must come to an end without a break, and that sooner or later we must go to encounter the uncertainties of "another place." Theologians must fight out among themselves the authenticity or otherwise of Methuselah's apparently preposterous age. All that concerns us is that the best authorities limit our mortal span to 100 years, and I am strongly of opinion that this age should be attained far oftener. A centenarian need not be regarded as a *rara avis*, and if we believed sufficiently, and followed with faith instead of argumentative suspicion, the guidance and experience of our predecessors, the eighties and nineties, if not the hundreds, should be within the reach of every capable citizen.

It used to be said that we lived pretty much as long as our teeth—*Mais nous avons changé tout cela*, and the skill of the dentist enables us to rearrange our ideas on this point, but the state of our arteries is a much more effective criterion. Here again, however, means may be devised for partially escaping this danger. But although we cannot obviate death, we may do something to keep it at bay by defying it. Mrs. Dombey died because she would not make an effort, and an old friend

of mine, a well-known Scotch judge, undoubtedly prolonged his days by a vigorous effort of will. He was obviously dying from double pneumonia, and could only summon up enough breath to ask his doctor if he had any chance of recovery. "I will tell you in two hours," was the reply, and the patient then and there made up his mind to get well—and he did so effectively that happy and successful and useful years of life were in front of him—so don't knock under, keep up a good and hopeful heart and you will help those who are trying to help you.

Death may come to us either as a friend or as a foe—it may be welcomed when the sky is dark and dreary, and no ray of hope or joy seems to be at hand to pierce the surrounding gloom. Poverty, pain and the hopeless misery of incurable disease, the loss of money or of dear and indispensable friends, the serpent-like whisperings of an ill-balanced mind, fed by an ill-lived life, will induce those who have not the pluck to anticipate the dread archer to welcome his approach.

But to others, the summons is a cruel and a crushing blow. Perhaps success has been attained or seems attainable, and we are hopefully looking upwards to the higher rungs of the ladder which we have begun to climb; material benefits have come in our way; we have sown the seeds of ambition and are confidently awaiting the harvest. Domestic happiness is around us, health has hitherto been ours, and everything points to a satisfying and perhaps brilliant future—and yet we are compelled to leave all this and turn out into a vague hereafter, the practical working of which is but scantily

expressed by the laboured attempts of clergymen to bring their imaginations to supplement the necessarily brief but suggestive hints thrown out by the Bible.

The Northern farmer's reason for dissenting from death was rather quaint—

“Do God Amoighty know what A's doing a-taakin o' mea—
A beänt wan as saves here a bean and yonder a pea ;
Our squoire 'll be sa mad an all, a-dear a-dear,
And I a' managed for squoire come Michaelmus thrutty year.”

And we all remember how Dr. Johnson when visiting Garrick and admiring the elaborate “plenishing” of art and literature which combined in the construction of “The House Beautiful,” suddenly exclaimed, “Oh, Davey, these are the things that make death terrible ! ”

I heard not long ago a story of a worthy Oxford Don, who was very ill, and asked his doctor if he had any chance of recovery. “I fear not,” was the reply. Then said the old man, “I am sorry, for I am very fond of living.”

But it is a mistake to think that people dread the actuality of death when it comes. They deplore its necessity when enjoying health, but view the prospect philosophically when it is inevitable.

We find Sir James Paget's Life “expressing the opinion that death as a natural act is probably not unaccompanied with the kind of sense of ease or satisfaction, which generally accompanies such acts ; and he said that he had never known ” (I think he spoke without making any exception) “any one who was really afraid of death when it came near.”

Professor Sir William Osler in his brilliant and

deeply thought out address on "Science and Immortality" writes: "To the scientific student there is much of interest in what Milton calls 'this business of death,' which of all human things alone is a plain case, and admits of no controversy. And one aspect of it relates directly to the problem before us—the popular belief that however careless a man may be while in health, at least on the 'last dark verge of life' he is appalled at the prospect of leaving these precincts to go he knows not where. This popular belief is erroneous.

"I have careful records of about five hundred death-beds, studied particularly with reference to the modes of death and the sensations of the dying. The latter alone concerns us here. Ninety suffered bodily pain or distress of one sort or another, eleven showed mental apprehension, two positive terror, one expressed spiritual exaltation, one bitter remorse. The great majority gave no signs one way or the other; like their birth, their death was a sleep and a forgetting.

"The Preacher was right; in this matter man hath no pre-eminence over the beast—as the one dieth so dieth the other."

Suicide, performed in various ways, from the *hari-kari* of the Japanese up or down to more subtle and scientific methods, is an easy and expeditious way of escaping from the troubles of life. But it is a cowardly expedient after all, and is punishable under the law, and if the jury depart from their almost invariable verdict of temporary insanity, *felo de se* is registered against the dead man, and in former years he was buried like "Ben Battle" in four cross roads, "with a stake in his inside."

This remnant of barbarity, however, is now a thing of the past, and a person who anticipates his ultimate fate by a bare bodkin or otherwise, is only penalised by being denied the rites of the Church at his interment.

The proposal was seriously made some years ago by an able writer in the *Fortnightly Review*, that under the name of Euthenasia arrangements should be made by which any one who was tired of life could escape from it legally and practically. If the victim hesitated to make up his own mind, a committee was to be appointed, and when the fateful decision was judicially given, some swift, and so far as possible painless means were to be devised for putting him out of existence. Various objections to this superficially plausible plan readily occur to the mind. First, we would need an alteration of the law, for the beneficent process just described would otherwise introduce the operator to its penalties, or the condemned one might change his mind, or injury might be actuated by interested motives, or, worst of all, the disease dubbed mortal might turn out to be curable after all.

Murder is happily not sufficiently common in proportion to the population to deserve consideration when we are holding the balance between life and death, and in spite of the ingenuity of De Quincey it has not attained to the dignity of a fine art. The Borgias in olden times, and Dr. Pritchard with his subtle simulation of the natural processes of fever, treated their subject with something approaching science, and there can be no difficulty under present microbive and other conditions, in unhooking any one from the peg of life without much

fear of discovery. But further consideration of this branch of our subject would neither be safe nor salutary.

In his brilliant appreciation of Burns, Lord Rosebery starts a subject which has often independently occurred to me. He says, "It is rare to be fortunate in life, it is infinitely rarer to be fortunate in death. Happy in the occasion of his, as Tacitus said of Agricola, is not a common epitaph. It is comparatively easy to know how to live, but it is beyond all option and choice to compass the more difficult art of knowing how and when to die. We can generally, by looking back, choose a moment in a man's life, when he had been fortunate had he dropped down dead." A little reflection will add largely to the list. How much bigger Napoleon would have seemed if he had been killed at Waterloo, and it would perhaps have been better for his great rival if his reputation had depended on his military, rather than his political exploits. Nelson dying in the moment of victory is a much more heroic figure than would have been the broken-down hero dragging out the evening of his days amid moral obloquy and pecuniary embarrassment, and worried by the extravagances and petulancies of his rapidly waning Emma.

Byron and Shelley, with their fiery forces of poetical licence and their lack of moral restraint, were bound to have ended in some regrettable catastrophe, had not kindly death dropped the curtain on the last act of their tragedy, and no one could have wished our glorious national bard to have been condemned to live out longer his feverish and ill-regulated existence.

Dickens and Thackeray were both floated away on the

crest of the successful wave. Keats might not have maintained the sparkling promise of his youth, and although Sir Walter Scott's later days added to the respect we have for his noble character, it would have been better for his literary fame if the battle of life had ended before the *débâcle* came. Many other instances will naturally occur to my readers, and it would seem as though there was more truth than is generally supposed in the old saying that "those whom the gods love die young."

Looking next to the other side of the shield, we find graven thereon the names of those who have been allowed to slip out of life from the carelessness or incompetence of those whose duty it was to keep them in. Foremost among them stands out the name of the late Sir Robert Peel, who was sacrificed to the timidity, for I dare not say the incapacity of the leading surgeons of the day, whose age and overstrained sense of responsibility made them unequal to the emergency. They had not the pluck to put their patient deeply under chloroform, expose the broken collar-bone and ribs and the resulting injury to the soft parts and do what would be now looked upon as a commonplace of surgery, and in place of acting promptly and boldly they had what I can only call the unnecessary folly of putting the suffering and perhaps dying victim under a mercurial course.

If Charlotte Brontë could have come under the competent treatment of the late Sir James Simpson, her life might have been spared, and I have strong suspicions that Clarkson's lancet, afterwards wielded by the valet, hastened the end of Sir Walter Scott. Cavour

and Byron were undoubtedly bled to death, and if Princess Charlotte had been properly treated, the history of England might have had to be differently written—just as the fatal leap of the Duc d'Orleans from the runaway carriage changed the whole destiny of France. In the dark old Sairey Gamp days, before nursing had become a fine art, I am quite sure that many people were allowed to slip away, because the fires of life were burning low, and no one had the sense or the knowledge or the industry to stoke them up.

I might ramble away far afield over these and other details, so dear to the medical mind, but possibly caviare to my readers, and I will only touch briefly on another most suggestive theme specially developed by Sir Clifford Allbutt. This experienced and sagacious physician has published a series of cases in which sudden and violent mental shocks have hit vital organs hard and produced chronic disease. The brain and the kidney and the heart are specially affected in this way, and I am sure that we can individually recall instances of the kind when some storm agitating the calm waters of a hitherto peaceful passage has brought about shipwreck.

What we have already said has in some way cleared the course of the ordinary man or woman, born under ordinary conditions, and whose varied wanderings along the pathway of life we intend to watch from the cradle to the grave. Dangers encompass the voyager on every side, but if he has been successfully vaccinated, sufficiently fed, preferably by the human milch cow, sensibly clothed, and not too early worried with books and lessons, he successfully emerges on the other side.

Then comes puberty, with its partial constitutional rearrangement, and manhood is next reached, with its enormous possibilities for good or ill. Boyhood and girlhood are, of course, the times when the bodily health is being built up, when character is formed, when the mind is being trained and the twig built to form the perfect tree. This is not the time to go into the vexed question of the comparative merits of public schools' chance training. When we send away our boys to be under the sole charge of others for a great part of the year, they are apt to lose touch with home, their natural affections are stifled, they too early become infallible, and it is sometimes considered bad form to work. On the other hand they get, or are supposed to get, a special kind of moral training from the early development of responsibility, they learn discipline and a high sense of manly uprightness and duty and a careful training in games and the capacity for friendship. In my humble judgment a combination of the two plans may be secured, as in my own case. I lived at home and had the advantage of the intellectual social life of my father, and attended by day that excellent school the Edinburgh Academy, where intellectual and liberal enterprise and able superintendence enable it to compete successfully with its rivals in the south.

Good old Cullen, in the phrase which forms our text, cannot unhappily attempt to obviate death itself, all he proposed to do is to obviate the tendency to it—in other words to stave off its approach as long as possible by means which will make life itself sounder, pleasanter and therefore more useful. Building up a stable body

and immovable mind, ready to make the most of surroundings, to take full advantage of opportunity, and whilst helping oneself not forgetful of those whose lines do not run in pleasant places, who have taken the wrong turning or fallen backward in the race.

But our own efforts to attain this desirable end must be aided by authority, and we have the right to claim the co-operation of the State, which is bound to invent and enforce good sanitary regulations. Some diseases and morbid tendencies have been stamped out and disappeared. During the whole long period of my professional career, dating from my student days, I have never seen a case of typhus. Enteric, too, should be a thing of the past; smallpox, were it not for a small but persistent gang of ignorant and mendacious cranks, helped by mischievous legislation, should be, as in Germany, almost unknown. Diphtheria, too, should vanish into the limbo of the past, and enthusiasts, with more faith in preventive measures than I possess, also believe that consumption should follow its example. One obstacle to the disappearance of the exanthemata is the foolish notion of parents, that they are necessary and inevitable incidents of their children's lives, and that the sooner they get over them the better. "What has so and so got?" "Only measles or scarlet fever," is the reply. What does this word "only" too often mean? Measles under the age of three years is not only a very fatal disease, but often leaves behind it inconvenient and dangerous sequelæ, "dregs," as we used to call them.

Scarlet fever, too, is sometimes the starting-point of

troublesome chronic disorders, and in both of these too widely-spread epidemics, slight cases are usually the worst, not only because they are treated with less ceremony, but also because the fury of the fever expends itself on a copious eruption, it seems to have less energy to strike inwards, and lay the seeds of disorder on receptive soil. Whooping cough is a nuisance to the patient and his friends, and I agree with Sir William Osler that investigations, experimental and otherwise, should be directed towards finding out how this special group of diseases arises, and whether they can ever spring up spontaneously. Look how rapidly, thanks to Manson and Bruce, Ross and others, we are getting rid of mosquito-borne malaria, and opening up once deadly countries to the civilising influences of the white race.

Miss Nightingale, in her notes on nursing, tells that she has seen with her own eyes and smelt with her own nose smallpox spring up without apparent cause.

Measles has been supposed to owe its origin to damp straw, and some of the lower animals have apparently proved the starting-point of scarlet fever—whilst cats undoubtedly spread diphtheria, and some forms of skin disease and dog's mange is undoubtedly catching.

Of course we cannot get rid of hereditary tendencies, but if we were consulted, as is highly improbable, about the choice of our parents, we would naturally select those who were free from morbid proclivities which might descend to us. Women, according to Matthews Duncan, should not marry before twenty-five, and there is no more fertile cause of destitution, misery and unemployment among the working classes, than early and

improvident marriages. An ill-fledged and ill-paid youth pairs off with a barely grown-up girl, who is then knocked to pieces by bearing the annual child, and crushed down by hard work and scanty food she soon loses all personal charm, and becomes slatternly and slovenly and perhaps takes to drink—and after that the deluge. Our parents should be, if possible, neither too young nor too old, of stable physical equilibrium and steady nerves, and they should be fairly well endowed, if possible, with worldly goods—and thus we make a good start. The period of infancy and early childhood reminds us of Sintram and his perilous voyaging through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

In my younger days we used to hear a good deal of the hardening process, when poor little mites went about with bare arms and legs, until they shivered themselves into their graves, or, on the other hand, they were so coddled up with mufflers and wraps, that the least breath of air gave them a chill, and the ever-watchful phthisis pounced upon its prey and bore it away in triumph.

And how many children have we not known who suffer severely and perhaps permanently from improper feeding. It should be made a criminal offence to give anything starchy to an unteethed child, and nothing can be more cruel than to compel those of an old growth to swallow repulsive gobbets of fat, which they often detest, and therefore cannot digest, and a pretty general consensus of uninstructed opinion bars the use of sugar, one of the most nutritious of foods, because, according to a popular but exploded superstition, it injures the teeth. I rather believe in letting children eat pretty

much what they like, within limits of excess, of course, for nature working through instinct tells them what will best agree with them. Sometimes they take a violent dislike to meat, and this may be well founded, but in almost every case a moderate amount of flesh does them good.

Regarding alcohol, save for medical purposes, all are agreed that it is unsuitable for the young, and I would even go so far as to prohibit its use up to the age of sixteen. And smoking should be sternly disallowed in early life. I am not as a rule devoted to grandmotherly legislation, but I shall always be proud of having put my name on the excellent Bill which prevents the sale of cigarettes to any one under the age of sixteen.

Tobacco, as specially pointed out by Professor Cash of Aberdeen, is distinctly injurious to growing lads. It stunts their growth, makes them anæmic and languid and irritable and dyspeptic, and these symptoms are so well known that employers of labour hesitate to take into their service any of those puny and ill-developed urchins whose brown fingers betray their too frequent flirtations with Lady Nicotine.

Sleep is the natural period of growth and repair in children, and if it is not successfully carried out, irreparable constitutional damage may result and the doctor should be called in. The bedroom arrangements should be carefully examined, errors of diet corrected, and above all the abominable habit of home lessons and anything which can worry or alarm the susceptible little mind, should be sternly interdicted.

Well, our friend is now on the tableland, and it is

partly due to himself whether it remains flat and pleasant or whether its further course becomes rough and uneven with uncompromising boulders blocking the way.

Let us lay down a few simple rules for his guidance.

First and foremost he should be moderate in all things—more especially in drink. How much of the crime and poverty and disease which shortens our lives, saps our comfort, and wrecks our lives is due to the excessive use of stimulants. I am, as you have graciously given me the opportunity of explaining in detail, a believer in moderate drinking. Experiment has shown that a little wine or largely diluted spirit improves the appetite and promotes digestion, so that the Bible was right when it advised us to “take a little wine for our stomach’s sake.” The gentle conviviality which follows well-regulated stimulation helps us to dispose of our food rapidly and easily, for again to quote Holy Writ, “Wine maketh glad the heart of man,” and cheerful society, which it is difficult to get on water, is well known to be an active aid to digestion. But liquor must hardly ever be taken on an empty stomach, nips or “orra drinks” must be studiously avoided, and as a rule it is well to concentrate our drinking on the one principal meal of the day, and then select the lighter wines according to taste, and vary them from time to time. The only exception I would make would be to the old, who are sometimes benefited by a “night-cap” of some kind, which soothes them and makes them sleep.

Smoking in moderation is believed to be soothing, and they say that worried people lay down their weight of care when they see the aromatic vapour curling into

space. Of that I have no personal experience, but this I do know, that excess brings manifold evils in its train. I often pity the victims of unlimited cigarette smoking, who, like my old friend Henry Labouchere, cannot sit for more than half-an-hour without the familiar puff, and doctors are only too familiar with certain symptoms that may follow—granular pharyngitis, causing a very troublesome cough, which may simulate bronchitis, irritable heart, chronic dyspepsia and various eye troubles, such as central scotoma, and in extreme cases, optic neuritis and seriously impaired and even ruined sight.

Regarding food, my own plan, and I confidently recommend it to others, is to eat what I like, and avoid what I dislike, and what I know from experience will disagree with me. Notwithstanding the respect and confidence I naturally have in my own craft, your own knowledge, derived from a practical study of your own constitution, will serve you far better than the doctor's advice, which is generally founded on what best suits himself—for can he know in advance what will agree or disagree with some one whom he has never seen before? Idiosyncrasy plays us strange tricks, and some people cannot eat mutton, pork, or veal; strawberries may bring about skin eruptions; shell fish do harm to some; and tea, coffee and even champagne sometimes produce sleepless nights.

I am sure that many people make themselves dyspeptic by concentrating their minds too much and too often on their stomachs. Sir Henry Holland, in his wise essay on *The Influence of Expectant Attention*,

tells us how we can upset any organ thinking too much about it, and we must all remember to have met pale, depressed-looking people sitting at some bountiful meal, and passing dish after dish, or insisting upon being supplied with some special kind of food which the advertising columns of their paper has pressed on their notice. They are daily aggravating their internal troubles by the unnecessary respect which they give to them. Another delusion is not to care what we eat, or how it is cooked. It does no one any harm to be a *gourmet*, if to use a vulgar phrase a man does not make a god of his belly, but articles of diet which have been scientifically prepared are undoubtedly far more digestible than if they are served up half raw or done beyond a turn.

It is an old culinary and dietetic fad, that game and venison should be kept until it is high. On my own part I prefer it *low*, to use a comical phrase coined by a young cousin of mine, and I have good reason for what I say. Decomposing meat breeds a very deadly alkaloid, which, under the name of ptomaine poisoning, may either sweep you out of existence with the swift certainty of cholera, or give rise to a variety of digestive disturbances, whose inconvenient symptoms are not always traced to their right source. So although your beast or bird should be hung until it is tender, avoid it like the poison that it is when your sense of taste warns you that decomposition is setting in.

It is important to live virtuous as well as sober lives. Sir James Paget, with all the might of his unequalled authority, has pointed out that absolute continence is not inconsistent with perfect bodily vigour. Any lapse

into the bypaths of vice can make us the victims of a terrible enthetic disease, which may dog our footsteps throughout life, and perhaps suddenly, without warning, strike a deadly blow.

Questions of occupation concern chiefly the working classes, and certain trades have their special dangers, especially those which fill the air with irritating dust, and the operators in them have notoriously short lives. Public-house keeping does not tend to longevity, for whether you imbibe your alcohol by the recognised channels or take it in, like Joey Ladle, through the pores, its contact with the tissues hardens them and causes them to crack.

Coming to the higher *couches sociales* we find that doctors have comparatively short lives on account of their hard and anxious work, and the infections to which they are exposed. And clergymen perhaps for the same reason, do not live as long as the hearty, drinking, swearing and roystering squire who makes his peaceful procession through the pages of fiction.

But whatever your line of life may be, try not to let it worry you, for care is said to have killed a cat, and as some one wisely said, we spend most of our time in grieving over misfortunes that never come.

A great antidote is a hobby of some kind. Acquire a love of Nature and her works, and try well, if possible, but badly, better than not at all, to fix her charms on paper or canvas, or learn something mechanical, but the essential should be that it is as far as possible removed from the official routine of your daily duties, and also avoid hurry as much as possible. Saunter along life's

highways, and see all that is to be seen on both sides, not imitating the motor folk who are never happy unless they are rushing wildly from place to place and breaking records as well as other people's limbs.

Take plenty of fresh air, sleep with your windows open, carefully avoiding draughts, and don't be afraid of the sun, imitating your dog, who immediately rushes for the nearest beam and lays himself down in it.

Take plenty of moderate exercise, golf, cricket and lawn tennis, which keeps the legs fresh and active and is an enemy to varicose veins. These constitute a real danger, and are responsible for many deaths and much inconvenience. They frequently follow enteric, and as they are much more frequently met with in women than in men, they are no doubt due to the tight garters usually worn. Inflammation, gouty or otherwise, often attacks the lining membrane of the veins, and clots are formed, which may be carried to various inconvenient places.

A well-known member of Parliament of my acquaintance had a focus of this kind, and one day a little plug was borne to the brain, and caused trouble there. Next another made its way to the lungs and pneumonia followed, and finally the main artery of the leg was blocked and gangrene necessitated immediate amputation. But by a bit of great good luck the *fons et origo malorum* was situated in the limb, and the surgeon's knife mercifully removed it along with the vein where it had its seat.

There always has been a good deal of discussion as

to whether a man is best married or single. Statistics show that his life expectancy is higher when he goes in double harness, but then figures can be made to prove anything. Of course in this case, more especially, circumstances make a great alteration, and as Sir Roger de Coverley sagely remarked, "There is a great deal to be said on both sides." With ordinary luck, although I have no personal experience to offer, I can see many advantages in matrimony, as securing domestic comfort and carrying out Burns's ideal, and I can quite see how the pedantic dabbler in figures makes out the husband lives longer than the bachelor, for his existence is more calculated, his morals are better regulated, and his personal expenses must be framed on economical lines to meet the family wants, whereas he who has deliberately chosen single blessedness, tends more naturally to be wild and rackety, to keep doubtful company and to love a cheery glass, and when he gets old and has no one to look after him, he is apt to become selfish and self-centred, and fossilised, and to live dully and drearily, with none but paid comforters round him.

Our friend is now about forty-five and is drawing near the edge, for certain degenerative signs of age begin to appear. He must now use glasses for reading, his hearing gets a trifle "dull," his arteries tend to thicken and harden, and he begins to puff and blow when he climbs a hill. And at this time comes to woman what is called the change of life, which is responsible for so many new and mysterious symptoms.

These are no doubt what are known as critical years, when certain definite physical conditions arise and pass

away, not, however, without giving rise to misapprehensions.

It is, I think, a good plan to pay an occasional visit to the doctor to be looked over, and passed sound, or the reverse. Most people go annually to the dentist to be inspected, so why should we not follow the same course, with the much more important bodily machine. "A stitch in time saves nine," and the expert may find a screw loose somewhere, and may summon the pharmacopœia to his aid, or get in the surgeon to do his work. A friend of mine was uneasy about his health and funkcd going to his ordinary attendant, so he took his courage in both hands and went to have his life insured, and luckily had his mind steadied by being taken at the ordinary rates.

We have thus drawn on to old age, and this may have its compensations and consolations.

And it is well not to admit that we are getting old, lest we really become so. At the risk of perhaps seeming foolish, let us continue as far as possible our more youthful lines, short of putting a dangerous strain on partly worn-out organs. Thus I have seen grey-haired veterans footing it with the best in the ball-room. The late Lord Wemyss was an M.F.H. at eighty, Lord Palmerston died at that age as Prime Minister, the late Mr. White Melville took his two rounds of golf a day at St. Andrews, when he had reached his ninetieth year, whilst a great friend of mine, not content at ninety-seven with the reputation of having about the cutest and soundest business head in Aberdeen, added to his reputation some time ago by picking a defunct company

out of the Slough of Despond and successfully placing it on its legs as a dividend-paying concern.

Doctor Guthrie gives his views in his own graphic way.

“They say I am growing old, because my hair is silvered and there are crow’s-feet on my forehead, and my step is not so firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. That is not me. The knees are weak, but the knees are not me. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not me. This is the house I live in. But I am young, younger than I ever was before.”

But whilst old people should be encouraged not to break too abruptly the thread of their habitual occupations, they must begin to take a little care of themselves. The senile heart, so well described by Doctor Mitchell Bruce, has been doing its unending work for these many years, and is getting just a little tired. We must, therefore, not put too severe a strain on it by walking rapidly up stairs or steep hills, or running, or jumping, more especially after meals. Two elderly friends of mine died suddenly from racing to catch trains, and the heart-failure which is now responsible for so many deaths, generally follows some physical indiscretion. And then we have the terrible Angina pectoris, the breast pang of the novelist, waiting to pounce upon us in a moment of peaceful calm, and in this connection we may give a word of warning against what I may venture to call minor acrobatic feats. An accident which is invariably fatal after a more or less prolonged lingering, is fracture of the neck or of the thigh-bone, which anatomical arrangement places beyond the possi-

bility of repair. This is generally caused by a violent jar or fall, and Rogers, who fell out of bed and, paradoxically speaking, never left it again, and the great pathologist Virchow, who stumbled in leaving a tram car, both slipped out of existence in this way.

Influenza at this time of life must be treated seriously, for it has an ugly habit of attacking any weak spot, and the only real remedy is bed and low diet, and strict faith in and obedience to the doctor when we are in its *grippe*. Old people must be kept warm with thick clothes, and good fires and foot-warmers, and draughts must be carefully avoided, and one of those mysterious and ill-understood things labelled "chills" may be caught and prove the starting-point of inconvenient and dangerous attacks. Then they must be well fed. Big meals are not so well borne or so much desired as formerly, and little and often should be the rule, and something at bedtime, and perhaps even to take at night as a seasonable precaution.

Regarding stimulants, although I agree with a wise medical friend, who holds that the old do not stand their drink as well as they could when they were young, I am sure that something of the kind is good for them. And this opinion is also held by Sir James Paget, who, writing about his father, says, "It strikes me that he had better have more wine; for I gather that he has only two glasses in the day. I have great faith in that saying, *Vinum lac senum, lac infantum*. I believe in mankind enjoying existence with ripe and measured carefulness, without undue overstrain of mind or body. But if old age leave him maimed, helpless, and perhaps speechless

for the few sad remains of dragging life, nothing can be imagined more dreary and depressing.

And so at last we are nearing the end and peeping over the edge. Whether we fall headlong down the precipice, or whether, like John Anderson, we go to sleep peacefully at the foot depends partly on fate, accident, luck, we may perhaps call it, partly on the immutable forces of nature, in some measure on ourselves. And what happens hereafter is beyond the range of speculation, at least here, or by me, if ever I shall know how.

Carlyle, in his essay on Burns, put the case in a consoling way.

“The sternest sum total of all worldly misfortunes is death, nothing more can lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men of all ages have trampled over death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, with a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life did achieve.”

These reflections and directions are more popular than medicine, or we might have given much more elaborate directions concerning the care of health, the best way to keep off disease, and to treat it when it occurs.

All I have tried to do is to lay down some broad general rules and to refer to various matters, which, although apparently trivial, help to maintain us in full bodily vigour, and to promote “*la joie de vivre*,” and by offering determined and scientific resistance to causes which tend to sap our bodily vigour, help us to lead better and more useful lives, and thus alleviate the tendency to death.

EPILOGUE

Tale and (tail ?)

BEFORE I finally ring down the curtain on my Parliamentary drama, may I set two scenes of much interest to myself, and which recall pleasant and grateful memories. In the first of these, I see myself seated at a dinner table in the House of Commons, with Lord Pentland, then John Sinclair, presiding on the right, and James Bryce supporting me on the left, and forty of my staunch old Scottish colleagues assembled to do me honour. After what the Provincial Press delights to call a "sumptuous repast," and before the stream of complimentary oratory had begun to flow, my good friend Eugene Wason, to whom along with Dalziel the idea of the entertainment was due, read out a long list of apologies, and my principal object for blowing my own trumpet at this time is to record the very gratifying terms in which dear old C.-B. gave his reasons for not being present.

And the second scene records an equally gratifying occasion when a deputation of former constituents headed by grand old Sir John Clark and Gordon of Newtoun, Convener of the county, and the most influential, honourable, and friendly of my opponents, made a peaceful invasion of Finzean to present me with

a magnificent silver testimonial subscribed for by Liberals and Conservatives alike.

Over occasions like this a veteran may be allowed to ruminate with appreciation of the kindness of his many friends.

C.-B.'s letter, just alluded to, ran thus :—

MY DEAR WASON,

I am greatly disappointed to find that I cannot join in the compliment paid to Farquharson to-night by his old colleagues and friends the Scotch Members, but as you know my domestic anxieties prevent me from making any social engagements at present.

The little friendly troop of honest Scots will not seem itself in future without "the Doctor." His genial temperament, his courteous and kindly demeanour, his cheerful spirit, his keen interest in all public affairs, which was guided by a good share of national commonsense—these good qualities attracted the affection of us all.

We are infinitely sorry to lose him from among us; and while we cannot avoid giving almost an obituary character to what we think and say of him at the end of his Parliamentary career, we fondly hope that he has many years before him in which to attract, and to enjoy, the friendship of all around him.

Yours always,

H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

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